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STRATEGIC FANTASY

FANTASTIC though it is, within three years of the end of the last war, Washington, London, Moscow and Berlin are all talking in terms of another war at an early date. A few American generals, indeed, were openly talking about war with Russia before the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, while Moscow at the same period seems to have decided that war between the capitalist and Communist worlds was probable, if not inevitable. The U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. have since seized all strategic positions within their grasp. And the "cold war" every day grows warmer, even though nothing has happened to disprove Mr. Roosevelt's view that Russian and American interests do not clash in any part of the globe. Washington to-day has ceased to think in terms of diplomacy; foreign affairs have effectively passed into the hands of the military, and E.R.P., as originally conceived in Mr. Marshall's Harvard speech, is, we fear, being perverted into little more than a race (on a generous scale) offered in the belief that it will lead Western Europe to reject Communism and accept America's right to control its foreign policy and military strategy.

Two reactions are at once visible in this country. The first is resentment amongst large sections of the public against the tacit assumption of war, which, according to all the experts, would involve the virtual destruction of this island. This resentment, growing, but not yet very vocal, goes far beyond the ranks of the Communists and the pacifists; it includes life-long Socialists strongly opposed to Communism, like H. N. Brailsford, who, in our columns this week, urges that a settlement on the lines of "agreement to disagree" should be attempted with Moscow. The second reaction comes from the discovery that American military aid as at present planned would not save Western Europe from destruction or from Soviet Communism; it would merely condemn us to put up a desperate resistance for a few months, to be followed by Russian occupation and hypothetical "liberation" by America at some future date.

Although the war chiefs in America have used to the utmost the provocations of Russian diplomacy to stimulate a demand for conscription and re-armament in the United States, America still remains a country with a predominant Navy and Air Force but with a negligible striking force on land. Hence some strategic planners in Washington envisage a war which, in its "liberation" phases, would be conducted from bases in Spain, North Africa and the Middle East. These areas are accessible by sea and capable of defence, while Western Europe, regarded as expendable, would be overrun by the U.S.S.R. M. Spaak, after recent talks with the United States War Department in Washington, is reported to have returned to Brussels gravely disquieted by his failure to secure any assurances of American protection for the Benelux Union. No one should therefore be surprised to find British newspapers, presumably in touch with British military experts, canvassing alternative schemes of strategy which will at least look less suicidal than an inoperative guarantee from America.

The article that appeared in last Sunday's *Observer* may be regarded as in some sense a reply to this American thesis. Starting from the premise that Russia's past actions give no assurance that she will refrain from military aggression against Western Europe, and that even an "agreement to disagree" can be attained only on the basis of actual armed strength, our contemporary reaches the conclusion that the effective defence of Western Europe depends on the maintenance behind the Lübeck-Trieste line of a fully mobilised standing force of land and air components, under unified command and with standardised organisation, which would "maintain a constant margin of effective superiority to that of its opponents on the other side of the Iron Curtain." The line thus chosen for defence is roughly 800 miles in length. Given the difficulties of ascertaining accurately the progress of Eastern mobilisation and the lack of depth between the front and its base ports, we estimate that the minimum strength of the forces which any planning staff would demand for such a commitment would be of the order of 60 divisions, of which at least ten would have to be armoured. Including the personnel of base depots and lines of communications troops, there would have to be considerably more than two million fully mobilised troops permanently stationed in this hypothetical theatre of war. Moreover, their effective use would depend upon the participant European nations agreeing to waive all individual claims to defence: the whole purpose of the holding operations would be to fight delaying actions against a potentially much stronger enemy in order to retain, if possible, strategic bridgeheads—perhaps in Germany, perhaps only in Spain and the United Kingdom—for an eventual American re-entry.

The first comment on this proposal is that standing military commitments on this scale would bankrupt Western Europe, utterly frustrate the economic purposes of the Marshall Plan and make millions of workers wonder whether even Russian domination is not preferable to this sort of American protection.

Secondly, the unity of strategic purpose among the constituents of the Western Union demanded by such a proposal assumes an abrogation of sovereignty and a degree of federalism much more drastic than anything politically in sight. Our contribution, for instance, as the *Observer* admits, would involve liquidating every British military garrison outside Europe and turning over to the United States the entire task of defending the Commonwealth.

Thirdly, it seems likely that the U.S.S.R., which at present extends its power by propaganda and Communist infiltration, and not, as far as present indications show, by armed force, might well be pushed into war by the arrival of a great hostile army on its frontiers. The temptation to conquer Europe before such a strategic plan (scarcely conceivable without the re-armament of Germany) matured would be all the greater because no such military "line," as the *Observer* postulates between Lübeck and Trieste, exists. In brief, whereas the war envisaged by the American strategic planners is at least realistic in strictly military terms, the *Observer's* theory is nonsensical strategy as well as fantastic politics and economics.

One clear lesson of the last war is that static

defence is rarely successful. If the United States are determined to create a Maginot Line on the Western side of the Iron Curtain, then the expendable forces required to man it will have to be provided by the United States, just as Rome once provided legions to hold the outer limits of her Empire. By no manner of means can the Brussels Treaty Powers out of their own resources defend the Western half of Europe; still less can they provide the divisions required for the "defensive offensive" which appears to be in the minds of some American strategists—the "recovery" of Eastern Europe up to the frontiers of the U.S.S.R. Even were the Western European Powers to embark on the provocative and hazardous policy of rebuilding the *Wehrmacht* as their ally, we still believe that Western Europe between Copenhagen and Bayonne is militarily indefensible against the land forces which the Eastern Bloc could mobilise.

The Soviet Union is guided by cold considerations of self-interest based on Marxist analysis. The real deterrent to armed aggression by Russia —if she has that in mind—is the knowledge that certain acts by her will lead to a hazardous war, while she has an alternative policy by which she may develop her vast dominions safely and on her own lines. Therefore, the best hope of security for Western Europe is for us to go resolutely ahead with planned reconstruction, aided by American dollars, and to say to Russia: "We obviously offer no menace to your security or to that of your allies. If you attack us, you will be involved in a world war which you cannot want. We shall obviously resist aggression; if we can't stop you we can at least scorch our earth. Your own chief centres of industry will also be destroyed by atom bombs at an early stage of an interminable long-range war with the United States. The alternative should appeal to you as preferable. In peace, we offer you a market as envisaged in the Paris response to the Marshall plan. We can absorb your surplus products and supply you with machinery and other manufactured goods without which the progress of your own reconstruction will be seriously delayed. We suggest that on this basis you should reach with us an agreement to live and let live on each side of the iron curtain. If you are right in thinking that capitalism will collapse by its own inherent contradictions, then the world will become Socialist, after many upheavals but without world war. If you prefer world war, neither you nor we can prophesy what will be the result."

The Tribesmen.

In his approach to the tribesmen, Mr. Jinnah has shown in his recent ten-day tour of the tribal areas a refreshing departure from previous British policy, but not said anything to reassure India or the world that tribal invasions will cease. The British saw the frontier problem as one to be dealt with by the superficial means of Danegeld and military garrisons. The annual subventions were just enough to keep the tribesmen quiet when things went well with them. In hard times, when economic necessity drove them to wander in search of loot, the garrisons were strong enough to hold them back. The armed clashes which resulted were, like fox-hunting, assumed to be enjoyed by both hunters and pursued, particularly as in this case the hardy tribesmen were thought to be "rather good chaps." Their occasional outbursts had the additional value of making the area a useful training ground for British troops. Mr. Jinnah has neither the resources nor the inclination to support such an attitude. As a Muslim, he is anxious to put himself at the head of his co-religionists wherever they are close enough. To do that he must have their friendship, and he can only secure it by coping with the difficulties of the tribesmen at their root—poverty. Hence his withdrawal of troops from Waziristan, and his introduction of projects designed to develop local resources and raise the standard of living. The appreciation of the tribesmen for these actions is evident from the warmth of the reception they gave him; and it is reflected among their neighbours, the Pathans, by the entry of one of their first leaders into the North-West Frontier Province government. On a long-term basis, the course Mr. Jinnah is following is not only right —it is the only possible one, particularly if he is to keep the North-West Frontier Province on his side. But unfortunately his plans will be long in maturing, and in the meanwhile the tribesmen, who are afraid of no one, are relishing the feeling of power they have acquired by their inroads into Kashmir. They are inclined to sense weakness as well as good will in Mr. Jinnah's position (Pakistan has pleaded its incapacity to bar roads to Kashmir) and, despite their brotherhood in Islam, they are not unwilling to exploit it. If Mr. Jinnah is to succeed in permanent pacification, he must remember that Afghanistan is not far behind the tribesmen and that firmness must be allied to kindness. From the purely military aspect that still demands a show of force which only India and Pakistan, acting together, can provide, until the causes which force the tribesmen to get their living by raiding can be removed.

Exit School Certificate

School Certificate and "Higher" will both disappear by 1951, and will be replaced by the new examination with papers at three levels—ordinary, advanced, and scholarship. The really big change is that for the future there will be no compulsory subjects or groups of subjects, any entrant being free to take such subjects as he pleases at any of the three levels. This is an undoubted improvement; with it goes the restriction of entry, from 1951, to those over 16—the minimum age to be increased later to 17 when more adolescents stay at school up to that age. Till 1950 the old examinations will continue, as it will take time to adjust arrangements to the new plan, and especially to fix its relation to the entrance requirements of Universities and to the qualifying conditions for various professional and technical examinations. It should be possible, within the elastic framework of the new general schools examination, to secure much more uniform conditions than have existed hitherto, and also to give the schools much greater freedom in planning their curricula to suit both school-leavers and those who are going on to further forms of education. Only a few educational conservatives will regret the passing of the old system, which was unduly weighted to suit the claims of University education and imposed an an unnecessarily rigid pattern.

More Houses

Mr. Aneurin Bevan announced last Saturday that the Government had already decided on an improved revision of next year's housing target, which would be well above the figure of 140,000 houses previously announced. On the present year's programme, he said that over 300,000 permanent houses would be finished in 1948, making a total of over 750,000—which was the Coalition Government's original target. He went on to claim that by the next General Election the back of the housing problem would have been broken. This, however, is surely much too high a claim. In the 'thirties, house-building was running at an average level of 350,000 houses a year; and even in 1939 there were between three and four million old houses, sub-standard by modern notions, needing replacement as soon as might be. Population changes have not involved any fall in the number of separate families; and there are all the New Towns waiting to be built. Perhaps by 1950 there will be, in a statistical sense, just enough houses to match the number of households; but that will not mean that the housing problem has been solved. Nevertheless, the upward revision of the target, made possible largely by improved timber prospects, is very welcome. Sound policy is not to slash capital expenditure indiscriminately, but to use Marshall Aid for long-term reconstruction.

PARLIAMENT: Representing the People

Wednesday

It began to look like the Lords and the People versus the Commons. The Government was in a quandary. Disliking the suspension of the death penalty, it nevertheless could not weaken the authority of the Commons who had decided it. The Lord Chancellor's personal dilemma was, if anything, greater than the Government's, since he had advised against suspension, and now had to recommend the Criminal Justice Bill intact to their Lordships.

His speech was ominous and overcast with forebodings. The pleasure that he would otherwise have had in introducing a great measure of reform was clearly diminished by the uncertainties of the trial period without capital punishment. "We shall be wiser about the matter in a few years time," he said. "Or dead!" interjected a despondent Peer.

That remark established the pessimistic tone of the Debate. When the Commons discussed the matter, it was raised to a high emotional level by the reformists, the moralists, the pacifists and the general enthusiasts. The Lords showed a different kind of emotion—the emotion, as two of them put it, of the common man. The prospect of murderers and rapers at large sent a movement of anxiety through them, and a thrill of apprehension over the cluster of peeresses. "Do you want to increase the risk of your being murdered?" was the question posed by the Debate. The Lords, like the majority of citizens who read their penny papers in the mornings, weren't inclined to take chances.

Lord Samuel surprisingly advocated the retention of the death penalty, and quoted a Gallup Poll in support of his view. This raised the familiar problem of whether Parliament should guide public opinion or merely be its mirror. Listening to the debate at the crowded Bar of the House were Silverman and Paget, neither of whom had any doubts about the amendment which they had sponsored in the Commons. They were prepared to be ahead of the public.

By stipulating that the death penalty should be suspended for a trial period of five years, a compromise had been made between the pure moralists and the utilitarians. For the moralists, the implication of Clause I in the new Bill is that if at the end of five years there have been more murders than expected, they will have to acquiesce again in the practice of capital punishment, which denies the absolute sanctity of human life. The Lord Bishop of Winchester will have eased the doubts of many of them by quoting the Thirty-first Article of Religion. He wanted the death penalty to be preserved so that the people may be aware of the various degrees in the "criminality of crime." He also feared that "the spirit of enterprise . . . so largely and widely diverted from legitimate channels" might have some effect on the number of murders—an interesting and convincing argument that full-blooded capitalism is one way of sublimating the murderous instinct.

The rest of the Bill was accepted with only mild reservations by the Lords, except for one of two wistful backward glances at the abolition of whipping. "I certainly would be glad to see some form of whipping," said Lord Saltoun. That wish is undoubtedly shared by many others, but the sense of the House was against its gratification. One enlightened Peer spoke for the majority when he described flogging as "the last relic of mediaeval torture."

In the Commons, meanwhile, the long argument on the Representation of the People Bill continued, with many of the Members whose interests have been unfavourably affected by the new boundaries, moving amendments, sometimes successful and sometimes in vain. The debate would have been tedious were it not for the sturdy fight by Members to retain in the constituencies the names of bishoprics, historic parishes, the ancient Cinque Ports and dreamy places like Bardfield Saling. When the Debate was resumed, the Tories gave notice, in the form of Churchill's letter to the Speaker, quoted by Peak, that they wished to rectify the under-representation of suburban and rural areas. Since they had originally called the Representation of the People Bill the Representation of the Labour Party Bill, it is likely that and Byers' agonised intervention suggested it—the Liberals will now move: "After Labour Party insert, 'and Tory Party.'"

MAURICE EDELMAN

PALESTINE AFTER THE PARTITION

WHILE Mr. Creech-Jones was busy proving at Lake Success that the partition of Palestine was impossible, it has in fact taken place. By this week 75 per cent. of the territory allocated to the Jews under the Uno plan was in their hands, including the city of Haifa where the British Army only retains the narrowest strip round the port and refineries. This was a signal victory since, in the last resort, control of Haifa means control of the whole country. The northern part of the Negeb, the arid territory where the Jews are most hopeful of further land development, has also been held by them with surprisingly little difficulty. Of the Arab population of the Jewish State, which numbers some 400,000, 150,000 have fled. But in most parts of the rich coastal plain Arab villagers are living peaceably alongside their Jewish neighbours.

On the Arab side, too, the process of partition has been accomplished fairly smoothly. Nablus, the most important city of the Arab territory, is now living under the discipline of the Liberation Army from Iraq and Syria. The main centres of disorder to-day are those areas, including Jerusalem, where British troops "hold the ring."

The success of the Jews in creating the Jewish State by force of arms has surprised even their friends. It is due in great part to their military discipline and training. Two years ago we stated that the Haganah was the most formidable military force in the Middle East. At that time this view was laughed out of court; but events have proved it correct. Moreover, the Jews do not have to exclusively rely, as do the Arabs, on the purchase of armaments from outside their territory. They have been able to switch the foundries and the light engineering industries developed in Palestine under British direction during the war back to armaments production. The six-inch mortar now manufactured in large quantities in Jewish Palestine can deal adequately with Arab artillery, whereas no Arab State can make any automatic weapons. In addition to the Haganah, which is a Home Guard, a Jewish army has now been established. It is this army which has performed the feat of holding the mountains on both sides of the Jerusalem-Tel-Aviv road and so securing the passage of the food convoys through the heart of the Arab State.

But mere military strength is not enough to explain the Jewish victories. These men and women are fighting for sheer survival, whereas the Arab levies which compose the Army of Liberation are soldiers on a campaign far from home. Once again, as in the Arab Revolt of 1936–39, the Palestine Arab has behaved as a passive victim of adversity rather than an active participant in the struggle for his country. The Mufti, with his guerrilla bands under the leadership of Nazi staff officers, has proved himself a cypher. The real contestants in Palestine are on the one side the Jews who live there, and on the other side Abdullah of Transjordan, who desires to enlarge his puny kingdom.

The ease with which the Jews have carried out the *de facto* partition has alarmed the politicians of the Arab League so much that they are now prepared to accept King Abdullah's assistance. For many months the Syrians and Iraqis, who detest Abdullah's pretensions to become King of a Greater Syria, were hoping that the army organised by the Arab League would be strong enough to drive the Jews into the sea. But now they realise that this is hopeless, and that, if something is not quickly done, Jerusalem may be captured by the Jews. This explains last week's conference at Amman, the capital of Transjordan, and the League's decision to ask Abdullah to use his Arab Legion for the reconquest of Palestine.

What will Abdullah do? He is the last surviving British puppet in the Middle East. His revenues derive from the British Treasury; and the strength of the Arab Legion—his sole bargaining factor—is due entirely to the team of British staff officers under Glubb Pasha, who have organised it, and to the equipment supplied from British armament factories. Owing to his feud with Ibn Saud and his rivalries with the rulers of Iraq and Syria, he has in the past been the only Arab potentate willing to do a deal with the Jews. He did in fact discuss a partition plan with them, under which the Arab areas of Palestine would be incorporated in Transjordan. He still retains his ambitions, but he cannot afford to alienate Arab sympathy by refusing to lead the "War of Liberation."

A decisive influence, therefore, on the future of Palestine is still retained by the British Government. But it is a matter for debate whether Britain any longer has a policy in the Middle East. Mr. Bevin staked everything on the effort to retain Arab friendship by his opposition to partition. How pertinaciously he opposed it, is recorded in the last report of the Five Man Commission on Palestine. This indictment of Britain—for that is what it amounts to—has scarcely been mentioned in the British press. It makes sorry reading. Sombrely the Commission piles up the evidence that, from the very first day, its task was made impossible by Arab violence (the Commission remarks drily on "the apparent ease with which the frontiers of Palestine may be crossed even when British troops are still in the country"), and the passive resistance of Sir Alexander Cadogan and Mr. Creech Jones. It is ironical now to recall that the main ground for refusing the request of the Commission to start its work in Palestine before May 1, was that this would render more difficult the task of maintaining law and order. Every other request was also refused. We could not even "facilitate the delimitation of frontiers on the ground" or permit "the provisional Jewish and Arab Councils of Government to exercise any authority prior to the date of the termination of the Mandate." We refused to tolerate any steps whatsoever for the formation of the necessary Jewish and Arab militia. As for police work, that could not be done by the Palestine Police Force, and the Commissioners were curtly informed that "the Mandatory had no suggestions to make as to how security could best be maintained between the termination of the Mandate and the formation of the militia." Finally, the Commission was abruptly advised that it would have to provide its own guards and that not less than a battalion would be necessary.

Perhaps the most revealing act of the British Government was its refusal, while it was still in control of Palestine, to procure the supplies of imported foodstuffs for the period after May 1st. In January the Commission requested us to make the routine advance purchases necessary for the six weeks following May 16th. If this were not done, it pointed out, Palestine would immediately be faced with a deficiency of half its present consumption of cereals, all its sugar, more than half its oils and fats, and more than half its meat. In reply, we blankly refused to finance such advance purchases out of Palestine revenues, on the ground that the existing Treasury surplus had been used up. The Commission retorted that the Palestine Administration would have had plenty of funds if it had not used the surplus for certain extraordinary items of expenditure which, as the Assembly had expressly stated, should not have been undertaken without consultation with the Commission. Anxious to be conciliatory, however, the Commission then proposed that Britain should procure the foodstuffs against a guarantee of reimbursement. On April 5th, this proposal was also turned down and meantime we had made matters worse by throwing Palestine out of the sterling bloc and freezing its London balances. To the war, which was the result of our refusal to assist the Commission, was added the threat of starvation.

What has Mr. Bevin achieved by such behaviour? Jon Kimche, reporting from Baghdad in the pages of the *Tribune*, has shown clearly enough that Arab hostility to Britain has never been fiercer than to-day. Our conduct in Palestine has been interpreted as pusillanimous weakness by the men whom the Foreign Secretary sought to woo. Even in Libya and Cyrenaica, where our Palestine forces are being hastily transhipped, we are so cordially disliked that we hardly dare to ask for a trusteeship for fear of the protests of the inhabitants; and the Americans, for the same reason, are unwilling to support our claims. As for the Middle East, we have failed to negotiate a treaty with any Arab ruler except the puppet king of Transjordan.

The situation could still be saved—but not at Lake Success. Proposals for a trusteeship, jointly administered by Britain and America, were always eye-wash. Now that Russia has hastily joined the Trusteeship Council, they are silly. The only sane policy is first to complete as speedily as possible the evacuation of British troops and so to permit the *de facto* partition to be finished. With the addition of the Arab Legion, the Arab forces in Palestine should be sufficient to hold the exclusively Arab areas. But fortunately neither side will be strong enough to achieve outright victory, and to control the whole country. In these circumstances, within a very few months, opportunities for peace negotiations will arise.

In these negotiations we can hope to play the part of a mediator. The Jews are no less anxious than Abdullah for a military alliance with Great Britain; and their development of the country depends on the use of the waters of the Jordan both for irrigation and for electric power in cooperation with their Arab neighbours. If only Mr. Bevin can persuade himself and his Cairo advisers that the Jewish State has come to stay, it will not be beyond his capacity, after the two sides have tested each other's strength and felt the catastrophic economic effects of war, to negotiate a settlement which will do something to restore throughout the Middle East a fast-waning faith in British statesmanship.

THE ITALIAN ELECTION

SCELBA, the Minister of the Interior, was enigmatic when he was asked about the K Plan—an alleged plan of the Communists to seize power on April 21st. "I can only assure you," he said, "that had this rising taken place, it would have been executed on the basis of the K Plan. Luckily, we got to know of the project in time, and we took measures to make it abortive. . . . Any attempt on the Communists' part to disturb order by violent means would assume the character of a rising. Its illegality would authorise us to have recourse to extreme measures."

But neither during the elections nor afterwards did the partisans, who remain well armed, show any signs of fight. The squads of *Celere* outside the *Questura* or tucked away in side streets had nothing to do but pick their teeth. Nor was there any employment for the troops in full kit whom I had seen moving out from the railway station in Rome. Scelba's force was sufficiently obvious to deter, and discreet enough not to provoke. Even had it been their intention to overthrow the Government by violence, the Communists would have hesitated on April 21st. In the key city of Milan, their spirits were low, and the swarthy police imported from the South by the Minister of the Interior looked anxious to use their American equipment.

Dejected from its original over-confidence, the Communist newspaper *Unità* could only complain of electoral fraud and corruption when the results began to come in. But no observer, including some of the Communist scrutineers whom I questioned on election day, had any doubt that the election was scrupulously fair, both in the opportunities for registration and for actual voting. This was by no means a comic opera election, with the main interest centred on the Election Pools. For days before the polling, I had seen the Italians arriving in thousands at

town-halls to collect their voting cards. Domestic servants in Rome and Milan travelled to far-off provinces in order to vote. And throughout Sunday, there were long queues of thoughtful and respectful people outside the polling stations.

"For the first time, the Italian bourgeoisie has done its duty," said the *Il Mattino d'Italia*. In fact, the Italian election reminded me of nothing less than the Croydon by-election, with the Right-wing parties dragging out, in every kind of conveyance, the sick and the aged of the middle-classes. There were even arrangements for members of religious orders who had otherwise devoted themselves to seclusion. The healthy middle-classes went enthusiastically on foot. In the course of the day, it became clear that in voting, as in campaigning, the Centre and Right-wing parties were showing more initiative and fervour than the Popular Front.

The weakness of the Popular Front lay in its election programme, a series of negatives. No Marshall Aid, no co-operation with the Sixteen. *Va fuori straniero*! Had the Popular Front won, it would, no doubt, have made vast economic changes. Instead of announcing these plans in detail, its general propaganda was concerned with declaring itself a movement of Italian independence, inspired by Garibaldi, and opposed to the Austrian *von* Gasperi, the tool of American imperialism, which was feeding Italy as a slave-owner feeds a slave. Many an intelligent Italian of moderate views, faced with these claims, reasoned rather in this way: "If I vote for the Popular Front, Italy may get Trieste for Gorizia, but she will be under Slav domination. She will be hungry and poor because she can't live long on Soviet cereals and Polish coal. She will also be a war-zone in a Third World War. If, on the other hand, I vote for Christian Democracy, Italy will get Trieste and Americans. But the Americans aren't my neighbours like the Slavs, and that makes a difference. Italy will be well fed with Marshall Aid, and I shall continue to have the unregimented Western Democracy that I'm beginning to enjoy. The Christian Democrats have no economic programme? But where is the economic programme of the Popular Front?"

Such a voter might well have voted for Christian Democracy rather than for *Unità Socialista* in the belief that a vote for the Saragat Socialists might increase the Popular Front's chances of victory. There were others—far more than had been expected—who, apprehensive of Christian Democracy's Right Wing, turned to Saragat's reformist Socialism in the hope that it might leaven the Coalition. Without funds or electoral machinery, but with the Third Force behind it, the *Unità Socialista*, despite its middle-class leadership, attracted hundreds of thousands of votes from workers who wanted change without revolution, and Socialism by democratic means. The *Unità Socialista* published a manifesto *Chi siamo e cosa vogliamo*, which set out clearly its economic and social aims. They are, as Professor Alberto Rollier, one of the candidates, told me, "more or less the same as the Labour Party's." Saragat's final election meeting in the Piazza Duomo, Milan, when the thin whistling of the Popular Frontists was countered by the deep roar of his supporters, was already a forecast of defection from Nenni.

The Nenni Socialists' original hope of a great popular partnership against the Right Wing must have quickly died during the electoral campaign. The Communists absorbed them till all that the Socialists were left with was their names. In this unhappy partnership, the Socialists had to renounce the clear purposes which distinguish Socialism and make it a faith, in favour of the flaccid generalisations of the Popular Front and stickers saying, "Cippico (the embezzling priest) paid for this," attached to Christian Democrat posters. On the morning after defeat, the Nenni Socialists must realise that their association with the Communists and the consequent division of the Party gave the Right Wing the opportunity of victory—an event which a democratic Socialist outside Italy can welcome only to the extent that political democracy in Italy is thereby preserved.

Morgan Phillips' message to Saragat, incongruous but striking on the walls of Rome and Milan, undoubtedly helped the *Unità Socialista* to win votes, particularly among the unhappy, underpaid professional classes, who seek a party of reform—but not Communism. The Nenni telegram, by contrast, made only a ripple; certainly nothing like the horrible splash it made at home. The Popular Front did not pretend that the telegram was sent by anything more than a group of anti-Bevin dissidents.

I met no Saragat supporters who had any wish to see a schism in the British Labour Party, following the Nenni telegram. On the contrary, the Labour Party is an inspiration to Italian Socialism precisely because it can embrace and tolerate a wide range of views and thus remain the comprehensive party of those who work with hand and brain. What many in the *Unità Socialista* hope for is that the disappointed Nenni Socialists will join up with the former Saragat fraction, now become the main representative of Socialism in Italy. "We want to create a unitary Labour Party," said one of the Saragatisti, "And our first need is the working-class."

Italian Socialists realise that the result of the election was a victory over Russia. It is not yet a victory over the economic and social abuses from which Italy still suffers. Fascism still lives, though in many disguises. In Rome, the M.S.I., a genuine Fascist movement devoted to Mussolini's memory, gained more votes than the Socialists. Singing Giovinneza and waving torches, the Fascists recaptured before the election in the Piazza di Spagna their ancient frenzy. But these fifty thousand open Fascists are the small fry, the Roman functionaries, the purged. The Right-wing menace to democracy in Italy comes from the secret Fascist sympathisers, the big industrialists and landowners, who provide the ample funds at the M.S.I.'s disposal. Politically, they have infiltrated into the Right Wing of the Christian Democrats, where, under cover of anti-Communism, they can work for a new Fascism.

To preserve political democracy in Italy, de Gasperi must watch his Right Wing, and make sure that in preventing the abuse of liberty by the Communists, Scelba does not restrict liberty itself. It is of the essence of democracy to tolerate opposition. The surest guarantee that the present victory of the Right Wing will not be misapplied lies in the rapid strengthening and reuniting of the Socialist Party, independently of the Communists, either as a Party of the Government, or, if events demand it, as a Party in constitutional opposition. MAURICE EDELMAN

A LONDON DIARY

I HAD known for some weeks that, along with Herbert Morrison, the Lord Chancellor was the chief supporter of capital punishment in the Cabinet, while Sir Stafford Cripps and the Law Officers formed a formidable legal phalanx in favour of its abolition. But in the Lords' debate this week, Lord Jowitt had to argue, rather shamefacedly, for the experimental period, while the Tory peers could contend that for once they were speaking the mind of the people in protesting against a decision of its elected representatives. I have not much doubt that the mass of ill-informed opinion favours the death penalty. In 1939, when the Criminal Justice Bill was first being drafted by Lord Templewood, public opinion would almost certainly have been ready to welcome abolition. But such phenomena as atom bombs, Jewish terrorists in Palestine, war hysteria, and the consequent deep sense of personal insecurity, have reawakened the primitive demand for retribution against the murderer and created a chasm between educated public opinion, which can discuss the matter rationally, and the psychotic voice which bays for blood. All this will put the Government in a very awkward position when the Bill comes back to the House of Commons with the clause deleted. Though Herbert Morrison will feel that his case for the retention of the death penalty has been strengthened, he can hardly accept a Lord's veto on a free vote of the House. If the Government supports abolition, it will be accused of flouting public opinion: if it opposes it, it will be flouting the House of Commons. Mr. Churchill's speech to Conservative Women last week indicated that the Tories are likely to make much electoral capital out of the Government's embarrassment. Therefore I shall be sorry but not surprised if a compromise is accepted. To introduce degrees of murder is one possibility. But I am told that some judges would strenuously oppose that, since it would place on them alone the responsibility which is now so subtly divided between the jury, the judge and the Home Secretary, none of whom need feel that they have actually condemned a man to death.

* * *

U Saw's appeal to the Burmese Supreme Court has been rejected and nothing now stands between him and execution except a possible reprieve from the Government itself. In spite of strong Burmese feeling against anyone concerned in the murder of Aung San, the popular hero, there has been no hurry in the trial. Aung San and his Cabinet were shot by gunmen last July. Burma is a Buddhist country, traditionally opposed to capital punishment; the British had to install a Karen Christian as Minister of Justice in order to make any death sentence possible. The case of U Saw of course stands in a very special category. Prime Minister at the beginning of the war, he came to England to obtain from Mr. Churchill a promise of Dominion status for Burma as the price of Burmese co-operation with the British. Mr. Churchill contemptuously rejected his claims; a remarkable article based on an interview with U Saw when leaving this country appeared in this journal at the time. On his way back to Burma, he met Axis authorities in Portugal, and it is certainly likely in his state of mind at the time that he planned some deal with the Japanese. He was then arrested by the British and kept in East Africa until the end of the war. I met him in London when, as a colleague of Aung San, he was one of the delegates of Burma to negotiate Burmese independence in the winter of 1946. He was wearing dark glasses and stayed on for some time in this country in order to consult oculists. He told me how his eyes were damaged. After an interview with the Governor in Rangoon about the possibility of his becoming Premier he was shot at in the street by men who, he said (on what evidence?) were employed by Aung San. The shot missed him but broke a pane of glass from which splinters went into his eyes. His hatred of Aung San was obviously deep and bitter, and when Aung San was murdered it was no surprise to anyone who knew about Burmese politics to hear that weapons were afterwards found in U Saw's garden. One of the gunmen later turned King's Evidence on U Saw. I have not examined the evidence. I only know that U Saw hated Aung San and is quite capable of murder. Personal vendettas have always been the curse of Burmese politics; the tragedy is all the greater since U Saw is an able man and certainly a Burmese patriot. I gather that he and some of his friends feel that he has not been fairly tried. Mr. Curtis Bennett represented him at an early stage, but U Saw complains that although the murder took place while the British were still the sovereign power in Burma, he has not been allowed a British judge or been permitted to appeal to the Privy Council. If there is any doubt about the fairness of the trial, or his share in the murder, the Government would be wise to keep him in prison but not to execute him.

* * *

When the senders of the telegram to Nenni defend themselves by saying that their action did not in fact conflict with Labour Party policy, their case seems to me a little thin. Although some

of the stages in the transfer of support from Nenni to Saragat may be a little obscure, it is quite clear that the National Executive, as well as the Foreign Secretary, approved the change; and those Labour M.P.s who follow foreign affairs knew that to be the position. I'm sure that the 22 who still stand by the telegram don't mean to suggest that they wouldn't have sent it if they had realised the National Executive were against it. A short telephone call to Transport House would have cleared up any doubts on that score. Their case has much more force behind it when they maintain that they have merely been consistent in their attitude towards the Italian Socialists; and that the National Executive has suddenly changed its mind, without consulting either the rank and file or the members of the Parliamentary Party. I can understand that M.P.s might well feel aggrieved at being called on to back decisions reached without their aid, and formed on reports received from Morgan Phillips acting as a sort of itinerant plenipotentiary for the Party and auxiliary Foreign Secretary for the Government. Unless officials appointed to see to the organisation of the Party keep to their job, and leave the Government and the Parliamentary Party to deal with foreign policy, some substance may be found for Mr. Churchill's ridiculous General Election contention that the Labour Party in the Commons is run by a caucus in Transport House. Conscious of this weakness, the National Executive has attempted to deal individually with each unrepentant signatory of the Nenni telegram by asking him to pledge himself to "desist" in future from activities "subversive of party policy." Plenty of room here for argument and manœuvre! Especially as most of the signatories can retort that they have never consciously been subversive, but have merely obeyed their consciences as Socialists and M.P.s.

* * *

I have been trying to imagine what it feels like to be imprisoned for accepting a Nobel prize. That was the singular experience that befell Professor Domagk, the discoverer of the sulphanilamide remedies, who is now in London. One evening in 1939, an unknown Swedish journalist in Berlin rang him up in his home in the Ruhr and told him unofficially that he had won this coveted honour for his great services to medicine. Some hours later came another call, this time from the German Foreign Office. An official warned him that the acceptance of a Nobel prize would be regarded as an act of disloyalty. The Führer could not forgive the Nobel Institute for its audacity in conferring the Peace Prize on Ossietsky, the pacifist anti-Nazi who was thereafter done to death in a concentration camp. When at last the official news of the award reached him, the Professor informed the Foreign Office and asked if it had any definite instructions to give him. He waited a week for its answer, which never came, and then accepted. Soon after, the Gestapo invaded his house, arrested him and carried off all the contents of his desk. Luckily his wife had time to hide certain documents directed against the Nazis. He was kept three weeks imprisoned under close examination before he was released. Only the other day was it possible for him to make the journey to Stockholm to receive the honour he had won.

* * *

A letter which reached me from Chicago this week charmingly illustrates the effect of the American witch-hunt. The writer is very indignant because I referred to a book written by Mr. George Seldes. He encloses the reprint of a violent attack on Mr. Seldes in the House of Representatives. Mr. Seldes is there smeared as an unreliable reporter and an unscrupulous fellow-traveller. The truth or falsehood of these *ex parte* allegations in no way affects anything I wrote. I did not rely on Mr. Seldes, but said that his book contained a devastating indictment of some big business men of America, just because it was based on extracts from official inquiries in the United States Senate which had not been reported in the American press. Certainly the American and the British public have been kept in ignorance of many of the official allegations that Mr. Seldes reprints. Why? Because these same monopolists, directly or indirectly, control a large part of the American press. My correspondent is so affected by the smear campaign that he does not even notice that my paragraphs were not about Mr. Seldes but about the press monopoly in the United States. That is the point of a witch-hunt: it diverts attention from the facts.

* * *

'Tis a mad world, my masters, and some very eminent people have decided that we ought to call in the mental specialists to sort out our psychoses. In August, the experts of over forty countries are coming together in London for the International Congress of Mental Health. Sponsored by the World Health Organisation and Unesco and backed by the British Government, the Congress will be three conferences in one. A section will be dealing with child psychiatry, another with medical psychotherapy and the third with mental hygiene. The discussions will range from the elements of aggression in the child, to "collective guilt"; from problems of world citizenship to industrial relations. I asked one psychologist why London should have been chosen. "After all," he said, "it's still the sanest place in the world." But why not Stockholm or Geneva? "Well, they are suffering from 'neutrality neuroses'," he explained. Anyone who is interested in this unusual and expert conference should get in touch with Mr. M. Harvard, at the Congress office, 19, Manchester Street, London, W.1.

* * *

Customs officials in my experience are usually reasonable and polite. The one exception to this rule I have met recently was in Egypt, where haughty and disagreeable officials seem to take pleasure in wasting the time of travellers. The B.O.A.C. does its best to mitigate the absurdities of Customs formalities which are surely quite unnecessary for transit passengers. Amongst the regulations handed to passengers is the information that they

> are allowed to take with them their personal effects consisting of, clothes, table cloths, towels, bed clothes, cushion covers, provided they are used and in unexaggerated quantities corresponding with the social status of the person or family leaving the country. . . . They are allowed to accompany their private dogs and fancy birds.

An English friend returning from India relates a revealing experience. An Egyptian official came on to the British flying-boat and asked all the passengers to state their religion. My friend had just come back from what are known here as remote parts of the earth (which means remote from us as we are remote from them), and described herself as an "animist." The Egyptian official was much puzzled. Wasn't she a Christian? No, she affirmed, she had never believed in Christianity and thought the worship of tree-spirits preferable to other creeds. She found herself segregated with three Jewish travellers from Australia. While the other passengers went ashore, she and the three Jews had to turn out all their hand luggage on to tables. Each article was meticulously examined. She finally got on to terms with the official, who confided to her that the only object of this search was to be offensive to Jews.

* * *

According to reports I see in the press, a man was sentenced at Dudley to two years' imprisonment for store-breaking. He then swore at the Recorder, who is reported to have said: "You expressed a grave doubt as to my parentage. I vary the sentence to four years." This must mean that the man was sentenced for two years for his first crime and for another two years for contempt of court. I heartily agree that calling the Recorder a bastard is contempt of court, but I wonder whether there is any precedent for punishing contempt by immediately doubling the previous sentence? CRITIC

PEANUTS

THE sun of Empire will not set while Empire nuts abound!
Who says "Don't count your groundnuts before they're in the ground?"
The Empire vista beckons as the foreign market shuts,
To economic questioning the answer must be "Nuts!"

There'll always be a groundnut
While there's a groundnut scheme,
While British Empire personnel
Are working as a team;
A golden prospect oversea
Unfolds to Britain's view—
The groundnut plan means nuts for me
And also nuts for you.

What do they know of Empire who have not groundnuts seen?
The nut is more than merely to-morrow's margarine;
The nuts that bolt the Empire owe nothing to the Loan,
Once Britain's based on groundnuts she'll stand upon her own!

There'll always be a groundnut
To keep us in good heart,
Great Britain calls the Colonies,
The nuts must play their part;
Though groundnuts now are far and few
She counts on nuts to be—
She tells what nuts will do for you,
What nuts will do for me.

Look not to Western Union to pull the country through,
The flag of Western Union is not red, white and blue;
Look to the British Commonwealth to lend a helping hand,
The far-flung nuts of Empire will save the Motherland!

There'll always be a groundnut,
Let Britain not forget,
Good groundnuts give good grounds for hope
(Though there are none as yet)
The lucky harvest we foresee
Our fortune will renew;
If dismal Jimmies disagree,
The answer's "Nuts to you!"

Back up the Empire groundnut scheme for gathering nuts in May,
That Britain those hard nuts may crack she cannot crack to-day!
The groundnuts of the Empire will keep Britain strong and free;
Those nuts mean more than nuts to you and more than nuts to me.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of the others printed.

Paste entries on a postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Margate Council are to sell 52 rubber bathing floats for £160 provided they are not operated in the town. They are regarded as dangerous.—*Daily Graphic.*

Most lustily of all sang the male voices of the choir—in the back pews instead of in their accustomed places in the chancel. That was because they were on strike.—*News Chronicle.*

Some weeks ago I stated in a letter that Van Gogh and Gaugin were not sane, therefore could not paint well. Since studying these master's works I feel I was wrong in making this remark. —Letter in *News Chronicle.*

A man of 24 had suffered from asthma since before he was born; it was claimed that he was cured by being swung backwards and forwards on a swing and then suddenly pushed off.

This, it was said, simulated birth and its repetition cured the man of his pre-natal inhibition.—*Sunday Dispatch.* (G. Del Strother.)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

I MUST really say something about the stack of letters in front of me denouncing, approving or criticising my recent articles. I wish there were room to publish more of this correspondence.

First, I doubt if my interpretation of history differs very much from that of Mr. Archibald Robertson or of Mr. Dobson, who makes in our correspondence columns this week the obvious point that revolution must often defend itself against counter-revolution. Who could dispute it? I have always refused to attack much that is to us disagreeable in the U.S.S.R. and in Eastern Europe on that very ground. Some correspondents have tried to suggest, as Mr. Robertson himself does, that the difference is one of the Liberal and the Marxist interpretation of history. On the contrary, it has long been clear that in this matter of the relation between ideas and material changes in history, Marx was in the right. I agree, too, that you can support different theses by cutting history into slices. I was not, however, interested in proving whether some particular revolutionary group had behaved sensibly or not, but only in rebutting Mr. Robertson's argument (which, in spite of his disclaimer, still seems to me clearly expressed in his letter) that one should never be "moderate" or "tolerant" in fighting for Socialism because the moderates and the tolerant are always squeezed out by the extremists who always do the job. I was far from suggesting that force had never been effective in history, but only that revolutionaries tend to use far more force than is necessary, thereby strengthening reaction, distorting the achievement, causing unnecessary misery and refusing those compromises that are sooner or later inevitable. After all, no revolution can achieve more than the technical situation permits. Mr. Robertson expresses exactly my point of view when he speaks of "selecting an end and sticking to it," though I must admit that he baffles me when, having claimed to believe in tolerance as a means to a Socialist end, he adds, "I can conceive no reason why I should tolerate those who thwart it."

The practical point of the controversy is, of course, whether the extreme intolerance of Moscow is or is not desirable. In speaking of the subservience of British Communists to the Kremlin line, I referred to an obvious fact. I meant no sneer to Mr. Robertson, who alone knows his own point of view. What does seem to be disastrous is that even when foreign Communists believe in their hearts that Moscow is making a mistake, they do not say so. The pretence of Kremlin infallibility is dishonest and corrupting.

Father Drury accuses me of trying to "assess the Christian Faith by quoting texts from the Bible." I would not dream of doing such a thing; I will not even follow him when he quotes the fine story of Christ driving the money-changers from the temple (surely one of the most remarkable examples of the use of moral force) to prove that Christ was no advocate of pacifism. No, my contention is that the whole of Christ's life, from the Sermon on the Mount to the crucifixion itself, has no meaning unless he stood for the principle of returning good for evil and opposing violence by love and sacrifice.

Finally, a word to several people who have written to me about *The Church and the Atom*. One correspondent argues that the report, which was not the work of "luckless bishops" but of a Commission containing both laymen and priests, only spoke with its own authority, not with that of the Church. And he points out that Archdeacon Hartill, who in a minority note "urged that the Church should judge modern warfare in the light of the New Testament," represents several thousand pacifist members of the Church of England. But the nub of the matter is his remark that the "conditions under which the Commission will be prepared to sanction the use of atom bombs are unlikely to be fulfilled in any future war." *Sancta simplicitas!* It is the job of statesmen and publicists who have decided on war to see that on this one occasion, owing to the peculiar wickedness of the enemy, all measures against him are justifiable. I would bet my last shirt that if there is a war the Church will not only approve of it, but decide that the only circumstance in which dropping atomic bombs is permissible is in fighting against godless and aggressive Russia.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND THE LORDS

MANY hopes and some pious wishes have followed the Criminal Justice Bill into the House of Lords. Among the wishes, no doubt, was the chance of their Lordships' restoring the death penalty. The hopes will be those of M.P.s and their "lobbiers" whose sponsored amendments fell by the wayside in the Commons.

The fate of some of these was unexpected and is likely to remain unexplained; many of them were not even called. There was strong feeling during the Committee stage, for example, about the clause that treats a "binding over on probation" as a conviction. Since the Probation of Offenders Act was passed in 1907, magistrates have been able to find a charge proved and, "without proceeding to conviction," to discharge the offender on probation for periods up to three years. In recent years many court officials and others "in the law" have regarded the distinction as artificial, illogical, and in some cases even harmful; one anomaly they have emphasized being that no such euphemism attends a "binding over" at Assizes or Quarter Sessions, where every offender is either convicted or acquitted. But they are a minority, and the attitude of the Standing Committee was more representative of the general feeling. Clause 3 of the Bill would put an end to the distinction; and the Home Secretary promised the Committee that, before the report stage, he would find a way of amending the Clause so as to meet their wishes. He could only have meant that a magistrates' probationary discharge order should remain, after all, something less than a conviction. But the Report stage has gone by, and the Clause has not even been mentioned again. Its critics are puzzled and angry.

In Committee the Government actually accepted a new Clause empowering magistrates who had sent a child to an approved school to call for periodical reports from the manager of the school as to the child's progress and well-being. But the Under-Secretary got this deleted on Report. The schools were adequately inspected, he said. Once the child had left the magistrates' hands and gone to the school, they had no right to interfere and none therefore to call for reports. At present if they asked for a report they always got it, because the relationship between schools and courts was cordial—the schools would always welcome the magistrates' interest; but the Government did not propose to erect this into a right to *demand* reports.

One amendment that was not even "called" sought to fix the school-leaving age as the minimum age for detention at the proposed new "Detention Centres." These places are to be, in effect, short-term prisons for really troublesome adolescents who need a short, sharp punishment to show them that the law, though anxious to help them if they'll make an effort themselves, is not to be defied repeatedly. "I do not want these places turned into a kind of junior or specialized 'approved school'," said the Home Secretary during the Committee stage. He thought it would impose an impossible burden on the people running the Centres if the Clause were to include the words "where he will receive education and reformative training." But he said he hoped that "education and reformative training" would go on in them simultaneously, though the period of detention (3 to 6 months) was "not long enough for a really good course to be undertaken." And, in Committee, Mr. Janner's amendment seeking to substitute the school-leaving age for "not less than fourteen" was not selected, the Chairman offering to explain why to Mr. Janner privately. Among penal reformers there is much disappointment about this; but perhaps it is not to be imagined that, merely because no statutory provision is made for education at these places, young "toughs" will be left to stagnate in cells or put to work at flock-picking, no attempt being made to cope with their minds. The conception behind this Bill is on a different plane from that.

Mr. Quintin Hogg wanted to get the Criminal Appeal Act amended so as to allow the Court of Criminal Appeal, in suitable cases, to order a new trial "in the interests of justice." At present, said Mr. Hogg, if a jury's verdict didn't make sense or a judge misdirected them in some technical particular, the Appeal Court could only quash the conviction and release the prisoner, guilty though everyone might know him to be. On the other hand an innocent man who, after conviction, acquired further evidence in his favour could not avail himself of it because the Court of Criminal Appeal was not empowered to receive it; in one recent case the further evidence consisted in the confession of another man that he was the murderer (which, however, turned out to be untrue). The Attorney-General pointed out that the amendment would enable a man to be retried for an offence of which he had been acquitted, which was repugnant to the law of England; that, in any case, no second jury could ever be fair to the prisoner because of the publicity that would have been given to his conviction, to his criminal record (if any), and perhaps to the scathing comments of the Judge who had sentenced him; and that a man might be tried and retried over and over again if the courts or the prosecution kept on making mistakes. Having said which, he thought that, in deference to the well-known views of His Majesty's Judges, something should be done to make retrial possible in very exceptional cases, under great safeguards; and a suitable Clause is to be introduced in the Lords.

Mr. Turton was less lucky with an amendment that would have given magistrates jurisdiction to try cases of indecent assault on adults instead of committing them all for trial (it seems odd that they can already deal with these cases where the victim is under sixteen). The change would have had at least one good result; at present some magistrates—or, more usually, their clerks—strain credulity and broad-mindedness to the utmost in "reducing" indecent assault to common assault, in order to give themselves jurisdiction. By this means they can save themselves the trouble of taking "depositions," binding over witnesses, formal committals for trial, and so on. Ideas of decency change, of course, but in this respect some magistrates' clerks take a surprisingly lax view of sexual assault. It matters more than might appear at first sight, because men who are probably abnormal get sent to prison for common assault, which is all that the prison authorities will then know about them.

Mr. Manningham-Buller failed similarly in an effort to get housebreaking made triable by magistrates. And the failure is regrettable for analogous reasons: the lower courts are always "reducing" the housebreaking charge—calling it larceny plus malicious damage if the prisoner broke something when he got in to steal, and larceny alone if he didn't. Many housebreaking cases are so slight that magistrates could well deal with them within their power to give six months' imprisonment, and all the animadversions of the High Court Judges have failed to stop them "reducing" the charge, which is quite illegal. It is surprising, by the way, that no one has yet tried to get bigamy cases spread through the various courts a little; at present they all have to go to assizes, where they are frequently disposed of by one day's imprisonment (i.e., immediate release) because their degree of moral guilt is so slight.

Sir Thomas Moore and Captain Marsden tried to get flogging put back into the Bill, on the tenuous ground that in 1938 the Home Secretary (then Sir Samuel Hoare) promised the House a free vote on it. But the Speaker had not "selected" the amendment for consideration, and in his absence the Deputy-Speaker would not reopen the matter. Mr. Emrys Hughes wanted to prohibit "any other authority," besides the courts, from ordering a whipping, but he met with no greater success. (Presumably he was after the teachers, but academic flagellation

was hardly within the scope of the Bill.

The Home Secretary, following an assurance he gave to the Standing Committee, produced a valuable amendment about people released "on probation" conditionally on their undergoing mental treatment. Its effect is that anyone refusing to undergo "any surgical, electrical, or other treatment" will not be regarded as having failed to fulfil that condition "if, in the opinion of the court, his refusal was reasonable having regard to all the circumstances." Some misgivings remain about the scope given to the Courts in deciding whether the offender's refusal to undergo treatment is "reasonable." But every action, to have the approval of the law, has to be reasonable; it seems a necessary safeguard against the completely unreasonable probationer, and in any case an order made by a magistrates' court can always be appealed against.

But perhaps the most valuable new clause is the one put in by Mr. Chuter Ede in furtherance of a new financial resolution, authorising the payment "from monies provided by Parliament" of the expenses of "any body or person approved by the Secretary of State in the conduct of research into the causes of delinquency and the treatment of offenders, and matters connected therewith." It looks as though a number of admirable organisations like the Tavistock Clinic and the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency, who were unrecognized by the original draft of the Bill, are at last to have more tangible recognition than Ministerial pats on the back at public dinners.

C. H. ROLPH

HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

THE history of the north of Scotland has a textbook simplicity in showing the shift of economic and social balance under the influence of military defeat and, at a later date, of an adjacent industrialism. It is a story of the disruption of a people in so thorough a manner that one is liable nowadays to regard the north as an uninhabitable waste of mountain and moor. The story is a bald statement of oppression and reaction—the imposition of an aristocracy indifferent to the people, a period of incredible exploitation, and a subsequent exhaustion that has prevented natural development and has produced to-day, at the top of the social hierarchy, a retrenched privilege that would not be tolerated for twenty-four hours in other parts of Britain. In certain regions, though not by any means everywhere, landlordism has a vicious irresponsibility that could only be matched in the eastern parts of pre-war Europe.

Once there was a considerable population in the north. To-day it is small and is still dwindling. But the land remains fertile. Ground that used to support families can do so again, and do so better under modern methods. At a time when Britain is rationed, when bank clerks plant potatoes in suburban gardens, when a dollar saved on food can be made available for Betty Grable, the north is a neglected national allotment. Unfortunately much of it is marginal land, and there is no great inducement to develop it. Those who are interested, such as the Scottish Department of Agriculture, or such bodies as the Advisory Panel on the Highlands and Islands, are hampered for lack of a comprehensive policy.

The Clearances give the approach to the desolation of the north. By the eighteen-forties a large part of the native population, long weakened under a divide-and-rule form of government, had been physically uprooted in order to make room for sheep. Gaelic-speaking Newfoundlanders and the thousands of clan societies of America are contemporary results of this. Villages were burned and levelled so that sheep could take the place of men, and wool could be supplied to the textile trade of the south.

Side by side with this there was the natural drift from backward rural areas into the festering wealth of the cities. The slums of Glasgow absorbed the Highlanders. In the second half of the century the home wool market collapsed under the assault of the Australian wool trade. The Highlands were now without men and without sheep. The estates were turned into deer forests and were purchased by tycoons of industrialism, or were retained by an aristocracy that had not then felt the pinch. Grouse and deer became the favoured residents of the empty spaces and Queen Victoria set the seal of approval on the Highland playground when she found the mountains pretty. Scores of deserted valleys developed brand new castles where a shoddy king from Bradford might indulge his regal illusions and, from his mock-gothic embattlements, watch the grass smother the ruined villages.

The Crofter's Act of 1886 was the first piece of legislation to put what was left of the native people back on the land. It gave security of tenure. Since then large powers have been created and are operated by the Secretary of State for Scotland mainly through his Department of Agriculture. The Department controls large areas of the Highlands, and in these it acts as an enlightened landlord. There are grants, subsidies, both direct and to local authorities. There is provision for such things as stud services to improve stock. Houses, roads, piers, and so on, are all dealt with. Similar work is done in co-operation with progressive landowners. Since the first world war there has been a considerable opening up of the Highlands. "Black houses"—the coffins of the living dead—have all but vanished. It is fifteen years since I visited one of the last in Skye. At that time the occupant was suffering from cataract and consumption, but he would not go to the county sanatorium as he believed his house would be demolished in his absence. Such is the hangover from the Clearances.

Much that is good and of permanent improvement is happening in the way of land settlement, but there are obstacles that make total development impossible at present. Freight charges, in particular, make it difficult to raise land to full production. Fertilisers are too expensive to be bought in outlying parts. To put into production the vast area of deer forest fit for cultivation and to reclaim land that has reverted to nature would be a task of very great magnitude.

Here is the impasse that makes it impractical to use full statutory powers in dealing with some recalcitrant landlords. There is no point in dealing with the owner of a sterile deer-forest if development of the land is tied to a profit-and-loss capitalism. Indeed, within the present century, in spite of security of tenure, deer forests have been created by the displacement of crofting communities. There exist arable and hill lands which are denied, not in general terms of shilly-shally, but to specific people anxious to farm them. All this is in the name of sport, or perhaps that some antique dame may pass her days surrounded only by her servitors and the mourning land.

The slow whet-stone of taxes and death-duties may eventually wear away the hard core of landowning indifference. The process is helpful to the Treasury but it is far removed from the needs of the native people. It puts nothing into the land and, indeed, ensures its eventual dereliction. Sporting estates are no longer a wealthy man's toy. The prodigal waste of money in maintaining them has to be calculated to the last penny, and the slaughter on the moors must show a dividend. A good kill can make all the difference between keeping or selling the yacht. Absentee owners, in extremis, have been known to leave a representative of the family on the estate during winter. The rigours of climate are undergone to ensure that estate servants and shikarees work in return for their keep. This lonely duty is usually undertaken by someone too old to regret the lost pleasures of the hunt or the night-club.

Last autumn I visited such an estate with a forester who had been commissioned to make a report on the woods which acted as a weather-break round the "gentry's house." (It might be wise to point out that a deer forest has no standing timber. Unaware of this paradox, strangers sometimes have false ideas of the extent of woodland in the north.) The forester's report stated that the value of the woods was 25 per cent. of what it should have been with a minimum of care. Landlordism of this nature, groomed for the gun and screened from responsibility, is causing a dual world in the Highlands. One region is developed by the Department of Agriculture and planted by the Forestry Commission. Its neighbour remains a lustral arena for sportsmen.

Life is coming back to the Highlands very much by fits and starts. Though the century of exploitation and exhaustion is ending, there are complete districts where the process of decay continues. Population graphs show an almost vertical decline in the last few generations. Yet new families are breaking new land, and hills are carrying heavier stocks than ever before. The Department of Agriculture has waiting lists for crofts under its control. Elsewhere the land is finally going out of cultivation. When Dr. Fraser Darling left Tanera in the Summer Isles it became unworked for the first time in memory. There is talk of "closing down" the isolated community of Applecross.

I was recently directed to a derelict three-storey farmhouse in Argyll. This had been far more than a croft and was still served by a line of unsteady telephone poles from which the wires had vanished. The farm could be reached only by sea or by a bridle-track, and the farmer had probably left so that he could be on a main road where delivery vans bring city-baked bread. On the raised beach leading to the farm were the ruined homes of earlier families. There was nothing, absolutely nothing of life except a few birds and the seals in the water.

Skye gives the contrast with new houses that are bright and neat and a sense of small-scale busy-ness, as in a Swiss valley. Across the sea are communities that will almost certainly vanish when the old people have died. The young have already left. Yet again, on some of the outer isles there are sound populations, and a Highland priest, Father MacPherson of Knoidart, has a scheme for transferring some of them to the mainland where they would be more at home than outsiders. It is noteworthy that throughout the pressure of events the Gaelic-speaking Scots have retained a dignity and independence. Out of their poverty they delivered the snub heroic to Lord Leverhulme in his attempt to industrialise the Hebrides.

There are people who see the salvation of the Highlands in electrification, in improved communications, in assured markets, in greater assistance to put the land into working trim, in a balance between subsistence crofting and fishing and small industries. There are people who believe that the despair of the Clearances has bitten deep into the native soul and that the inhabitants do not care any more. There are people who say that the desolation of the north is evidence, not of economic factors, but of the deliberate destruction of Gaeldom, the murder of one culture by another, in terms of Highlanders and Hanoverians.

These are debating points for sociologists and historians. What matters is that the inhabitants of the north are entering a phase of uncertain recovery to which the national community is more or less indifferent. The inhabitants of megalopoli, Scots or English, do not care. The north is unknown, possessing neither Blackpool nor continental cooking. Its contribution to the national economy is not enough for serious attention.

From a governmental point of view is it worth a major operation to put, at the most, some tens of thousands of people back on the land? There can only be one answer as long as it is more important to have ten men working in a factory than a hundred living on the land but producing no large and certain surplus. Even so, the possibilities of northern food production, particularly of beef and mutton, have not been fully developed. If the English stomach or a sense of great social experiment should ever turn attention northwards the problem will have to be tackled with the thoroughness of the Jews colonising the desert.

NEIL MCCALLUM

HEROIC INSCRIPTIONS

ST. AUGUSTINE AT CARTHAGE

Between the boneyards and the ruined sea,
Dido, suburban queen of history,
Once more receives a man whom no one knows,
Once more is left to burn—in Roman prose.

THE EMPRESS THEODOSIA

Where are the circus crowds that would adore
This painted lady, formerly a whore?
Now she accepts their homage for a saint,
And in mosaic has no need of paint.

ROMULUS AUGUSTULUS

The world ends in lost places, and the geese
Step through the ruins of eternal peace.
Beyond Ravenna, in the swamps, he lies:
The wolf that suckled him dug out his eyes.

DUNSTAN THOMPSON

The Arts and Entertainment

A VISIONARY WORK

THERE was a time when it seemed as though Vaughan Williams might be content to spend the remainder of his life in Shallow's orchard, enjoying the unbuttoned comfort of rural talk and strictly local jokes, listening to the pleasant archaic sounds of pipe and tabor, and serenely meditating under the pale blue English sky. To all who supposed him thus safely pigeon-holed, the Fourth Symphony (1935) came as a rude shock: blunt, strident, unyieldingly "modern," it was his first work to make a profound impression on foreigners, being also the first which transcended all limitations of dialect, while remaining strongly personal. It was a sincere reaction to the then novel violence of our age, a reaction not wholly (as it seems to me) digested into terms of music; the composer himself has said that he is not certain whether he "likes" it, "but this is what I meant." The Fifth Symphony (1943), superficially a return to pastoral serenity, was filled with the renewed strength of a man who has faced the worst: a very beautiful and moving work, which seemed at the time to form a fitting climax to his career. Now, however, we can see that it is his latest symphony, the Sixth in E minor (of which the first two performances were given last week under Sir Adrian Boult), which more truly merits that description; an extraordinary and unpredictable burst of creative activity for a man of seventy-five, in which he seems to have effected a kind of synthesis of the two preceding symphonies, indeed to have summed up the whole of his life-work, but at the same time, to direct a serene and courageous glance into the future, to meditate on first and last things with a grasp and profundity worthy of Beethoven.

That name comes inevitably to mind, not because of stylistic similarities, but because of the impression which the new symphony makes of spiritual struggle, of ethical issues, of a tireless search for some kind of reality beneath the flux of living—and finally, of a withdrawal into the world of pure contemplation. It has no overt programme, and I know how inadequate (or excessive) such verbal "interpretations" must always seem, above all perhaps to the composer, who has written a charming, modest, teasing, strictly factual "analysis" of his own work. But as this great symphony drew to its conclusion in the Albert Hall, there cannot have been many in the hushed and deeply attentive crowd whose thoughts were concentrated wholly on minims and crotchets; what we had been mysteriously forced to contemplate was the future of humanity itself. In the slow movement there is a passage where the rich, "free" polyphony of the strings is disturbed by a brutally simple trumpet figure of three anapaestic B flats, repeated almost a hundred times; at any other time we could have generalised the clear sense of menace therein conveyed as Evil, or Fear, or Hate, or Death, but in 1948 it seems as unmistakable as the trumpet interruptions at the end of the *Missa Solemnis;* what else can we think of but the shadow which now hangs over all planetary life, what else but War? The powerful and sardonic Scherzo has an episodic tune for the saxophone which can hardly fail to remind the composer's admirers that he has previously, in *Job,* used this oily instrument to represent hypocrisy; in the present context it suggests that familiar and calmly efficient form of lying which is simply a direct inversion of the truth.

When the struggle of the Scherzo dies away, we are left with a final movement unique in music; a movement which would be daring enough in a string quartet, but which in a symphony could hardly have occurred to anyone else but Vaughan Williams—except perhaps Sibelius. For ten minutes the music "drifts about" (the composer's phrase) in a passionless, and yet strangely intense, pianissimo; every page of the score is plastered with the words "*senza crescendo.*" Texture and layout show affinities with the prelude to the third act of *Tristan,* and with Holst's *Neptune:* a grey, ghostly, disembodied motion, on and on, for ever; profoundly sad, and yet filled with the inner calm of resignation. The effect of this Epilogue is so visionary that it becomes meaningless to think of it as "abstract" music—or rather the adjective takes on a more precise meaning; it is as though we were left contemplating a dead planet, on which nothing is left at all but the inextinguishable Platonic "idea" of what has been. The last bars hover mysteriously between the comparative warmth of E flat major and the interplanetary cold of E minor; for a moment it seems that the former has won, there is a brief pause, and the grey minor chord creeps back and dies away to nothing. It is, after all, as the composer remarks in his common-sense, bantering way, "the home key"; to which the only possible reply is that of the crowd in the inn scene of *Peter Grimes*? "Home! Do you call *that* home?" Whether or not such are the ideas which lie behind this extraordinary work, there can hardly be any question of its mastery in terms of structure and orchestral colour; it is perhaps the first product of the composer's absolute maturity, in the sense in which *Otello* is the first of Verdi's.

* * *

A flying visit to the Bath Assembly left a vivid impression of success and competence, coupled with youthful enthusiasm; how the English love festivals, how well the Glyndebourne group understand how to organise them, and how lucky (so far) they have been with the weather! Mozart's *Seraglio,* a work never heard in England nowadays and yet exactly the sort of thing we like, was quite wonderfully at home in the beautiful old Theatre Royal; except for the unsuitably expanded and Fleckerised Bassa Selim, the performance was on a small, even a slightly amateurish, scale; yet in this house it was impossible not to be captivated—would that all theatres were built on the old, compact, *round* plan.

Don Giovanni at the Cambridge, restudied and largely recast under the inspiring direction of Carl Ebert, is enormously improved; the awful dummy statue has gone, and Martin Lawrence's Leporello is a great improvement on Tajo's. But what makes a return visit indispensable for all lovers of opera is the truly magnificent Donna Anna of Ljuba Welitsch, dramatically and vocally thrilling, and realised in terms of a consistently true and musical *legato* such as is now seldom to be heard.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

THE THEATRE

"Hamlet" and "The Merchant of Venice," at Stratford

"Break-Up," at the Arts

An excellent all-round cast, brilliant dresses and settings and, in Mr. Robert Helpmann and the producer, Mr. Michael Benthall, two undoubted artists—these combine to make the start of the new season at Stratford most exhilarating. The influence of the ballet is everywhere apparent; and what could be more healthy and fruitful? In the production one may trace to the ballet, I suspect, not only the richness and the colour and the inventiveness of the patterns but also the firm line with which the outline of the action is drawn, clear and swift; within it there is a profusion of telling detail, but this is never allowed to distract. The eye is constantly taken with the sheer beauty of the scene and the movement, but it is never taken off the outline. Mr. Benthall is freely called a visual producer; and it is true that the picture, the lovely grouping, the enormously effective lighting, the shift and sweep of the pattern are a delight in themselves. But he is not a "tricky" producer; nothing is put in simply for effect. Everything contributes. It is all used with a strict subordination to the action. This comes out remarkably in the *Merchant of Venice,* carried over from last year with an entirely new cast. This play has always seemed to me tedious, but here it is given a wonderfully fresh excitement. Mr. Benthall uses the whole of the very large stage, uses it as if he had built it himself, had designed every inch of it, every exit, every step, for some particular effect, and the general impression is of swirls of splendid gaiety, with the pattern stamped firmly on it and shot through with the sultry pathos of Mr. Helpmann's beautifully moving Shylock. The *Hamlet* reminded me in its formal construction of a concerto where the orchestra carries the movement forward to the solo instrument in a series of brilliant rushes. Victorian gothic is at first sight a "tricky", fashionable choice, but in the result it is easily acceptable. Indeed the period gives a fresh vividness to the scenes of the court and its entourage and is only slightly distracting when weapons have to be rather too obviously placed. The decor by Mr. James Bailey creates the richest of pictures which glow all the more dazzlingly against a sombre perspective of Waterhouse Gothic pillars into the depths of which fade away the sepulchral ghost and the blazing candelabra. Again there is the extraordinary pace, derived from a firm narrative line, and a most telling use of action; for example, I have never seen so effectively done the attempt to round up Hamlet after Polonius' murder and his subsequent confronting of the King. I have only one cavil with the production. In his emphasis on picture and movement, Mr. Benthall seems to undervalue the word: the enunciation of the cast is not what it should be and at times they are maddeningly inaudible (Mr. Paul Scofield being the worst offender).

Mr. Helpmann is probably an equal partner in this venture; certainly the productions are perfectly suited to his particular gifts. When first he brought these from the ballet to the theatre, it was only to be expected that he should try to insure against possible deficiencies by relying too heavily on miming. Now he has this in better—indeed in perfect—command, and his voice, though still small in range, has perceptibly improved. His Shylock seems to me a masterpiece. In the high renaissance glare his black villain, perfectly accented, exalts and cringes and wails with a wonderful conviction. His Hamlet is a small Hamlet, even perhaps a little rushed and hustled, but one felt that he had taken the exact measure of his own particular talent and played that to its uttermost without ever trying to exceed it. He makes least of the addict who dissipates action in words and moves too fast towards the expressive gesture. But if there are as many Hamlets as there are actors, this one seems to me within its characteristic limits a considered and persuasive whole.

The production being designed for this vivid, quick-silver conception, Mr. Paul Scofield, the alternative Hamlet, had the difficult task of fitting himself into it. This much-talked-of young actor certainly has gifts, youth, looks and, above all, attack. He can take the stage, but does not give the impression of knowing quite what to do with it when he has it and of having to fill in with the tricks that are rather dangerously growing on him. The pace was too much for him, and, where Mr. Helpmann brought it off by clever timing and subtle variations in pace he too often simply scampered. There was a most notable King in Mr. Anthony Quayle, a very solid performance with deep reserves behind it. Miss Diana Wynyard confounds those who can only imagine her in light comedy; she speaks Shakespearean verse more than adequately; she has authority and presence. Mr. Esmond Knight, Mr. Noel Willman, Mr. John Justin, Mr. John Kidd, Miss Claire Bloom (the Ophelia) deserve more than the mere mention which is all there is space to give them. All in all, this is a national venture we can be thoroughly proud of.

In Helge Krog's *Break Up* at the Arts there are only three characters, a husband and wife and a child of ten who is also in love with the wife. Circumstances combine to bring their lives to a breaking point, which is also an unravelling point, and for the three acts they sift over, dissect and analyse their lives, their feelings and their actions. A most un-English procedure! And I can imagine many people heartily disliking it. For my part I found the unravelling conducted with the greatest subtlety and understanding, the sharpest insight into human relations and behaviour and with a most convincing passion, and it gives some wonderful chances for emotional acting. Mr. Robert Harris was the least happy of the three, but Miss Sonia Dresdel and Mr. André Morel were perfectly matched. He builds up a solid portrait of ruthless self-sufficiency with a piece of masterly relaxed acting. And as for Miss Dresdel, I know only two other actresses who could get as near as she does to the combination of passion and logic that the part demands—Miss Beatrix Lehmann and Miss Mary Morris. And there one names the three actresses we are—inexplicably—least often given the chance of seeing. There are people who call Miss Dresdel a theatrical actress without apparently realising the compliment they are paying. I recommend anyone who enjoys the full thrill of passionate playing to visit the Arts.

T. C. WORSLEY

RADIO NOTES

THE critic listening in London suffers from the almost overwhelming temptation to attend only to works in the Home Service, the Third Programme and the Light Programme. Between them they will give him far more than he can listen to, unless, like Cerberus, he has three pairs of ears. Yet even to-day the majority of the people do not live in London or Metroland. Somewhere beyond Aylesbury lie the provinces, benighted no doubt but inhabited by millions; and when they listen to the wireless it is not the basic Home Service they hear but the local regional station. The staple items of the week's broadcasting, the News, *Itma*, *Music Hall*, *Progress Report*, *Monday Night Theatre* and so on they will hear wherever they are, but they will listen also to much that goes unnoticed in London—and not necessarily, as is sometimes thought, to brass bands instead of symphony concerts.

Regional producers work under difficulties unknown to those responsible for the national programmes. One is the concentration of the country's cultural life in London, which means that regional talent is continually drifting away to the capital. Then the regions themselves, with the exception of Northern Ireland, are only sketchily homogeneous. West Region, for instance, extends from Cornwall to Wiltshire; what cultural common denominator have Swindon and Polperro? Again, for broadcasting purposes Norwich is a Midland town. It is not easy to see what interests link Norwich with Birmingham that do not also link it with Liverpool. In other words, the regional planner must think in terms rather of localities than of a region which is largely factitious, and he must see that local interests, which are real, get their full share of programme space.

But how is this to be done without plunging the rest of the region into boredom? One way out of the difficulty is that followed in the monthly *Midland Parliament*. The title, perhaps, is a misnomer; the programme consists essentially of a discussion between four or five public men of the region whose reputation, or the interests they represent, transcend the merely local. With one or other of the speakers the listener, it is to be assumed, can roughly identify himself. The last of the present series, *Is Individual Liberty Doomed?* suffered, as discussion on the subject so often does, because of the participants' failure to agree on a definition of liberty, though the chairman, the headmaster of Malvern, worked mightily to persuade the speakers to commit themselves. But in my experience the series is always worth searching for in the exiguous space allotted to alternative regional programme in the *Radio Times*. When the theme is an aspect of industry, *Midland Parliament* has a value far beyond the merely regional.

So, too, has the weekly Northern programme, *Public Enquiry*, which illustrates another device by which local and regional interests may be balanced. It is a good example of what may be called the peripatetic programme, a more serious variant of Mr. Wilfred Pickles's *Have a Go*, which is a characteristically Northern product. *Public Enquiry* is in fact a town meeting called to discuss a specific subject and linked with experts in the studio. Last week, for instance, the people of Spennymoor, in Durham, met to discuss education. The speakers in the hall were, one would say, a representative cross-section of the town; there were miners, teachers, clergy, engineers, personnel managers, schoolchildren; I liked especially the speaker who began: "I am a youth leader, a father and a railwayman." The discussion was lively and uninhibited; the speakers had plainly come to make themselves heard. At given points in the programme the experts in the studio—the High Master of Manchester Grammar School, Miss Phyllis Bentley and Captain Harry Rée—came in to comment on the discussion, to give their views and answer questions. Quite apart from its merit as entertainment, *Public Enquiry* seems to me valuable because it points the way towards one method of bridging the gap between the two broad classes into which the community is now divided, the laity and the experts, the "they" of Lear's nonsense verse and of common parlance. In this instance, though "they" were in a studio miles away, the people of Spennymoor could question, chivvy and challenge them, and "they" had to justify themselves.

WILLIAM SALTER

THE MOVIES

"The First Gentleman," at the Empire
"One Night With You," at the Marble Arch Odeon
"The Miracle of Morgan's Creek," at the Tatler

The First Gentleman is a domestic comedy about the Prince Regent which perhaps, with Mr. Robert Morley in the part, went better as a play. The film seems to trail rather laboriously after theatrical effect. A whale of a part, no doubt, for Mr. Cecil Parker, who has a talent for stealing our affections in a pompously idiotic role, but does this caricature come to life on the screen? Don't the creaking stays need a creaking stage-board underfoot? Aren't the nips of the brandy, the languors, the sub-witticisms, the affronts, the fireworks, the onion domes, the howls from the mob less delicious than they should be? After twenty minutes or so, it must be admitted that they are. We very soon get the measure of this buffoon. He will exploit a thick-skinned but flinching humour in drawling tones; he will receive the bishop with a lady on his knee; he will conduct in person a minuet or a fanfare; he will swagger, sulk, imperiously demand and blandly cave in, etc. A dandified fatty as remote from history as Thackeray's satire, capable maybe of filling the stage but not ninety minutes of a screen. Yet *The First Gentleman* has merits: Mr. Parker (never negligible) himself, the royal lovers (Miss Joan Hopkins and M. Jean-Pierre Aumont), the orthodox direction of Cavalcanti. This is certainly not one of those historical romances for which the screen has grown infamous, and as certainly, alas, not among such minor triumphs as *Sarajevo* and *Mayerling*.

One Night With You is yet another shot at an English musical comedy. We go on trying, and this time it may seem that if we go on trying long enough we should get somewhere. *One Night With You* (good God, what originality!) has at least in Signor Nino Martini a tenor who can sing, in Miss Patricia Roc a heroine who looks nice, in Mr. Bonar Colleano and Mr. Stanley Holloway two comics of a high order, and the funny moments come more often than

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WE have been awaiting the arrival of the Beau Decca with some excitement, and indeed enthusiasm. As I write it is playing. The reproduction is quite marvellous. The high notes are heard with a fidelity and sweetness which is thrilling. The Beau Decca is a wonderful instrument. Space does not permit my giving an adequate description of the glorious sound which reaches me as I listen to the Academic Festival of Brahms (Decca K1726). There is a life-like ring about the quality. The feeling of an orchestra with its great range of sound reproduced. A sensation of reproduction that lives. If only I had more space.

The Beau Decca is housed in an attractively designed walnut cabinet, which is pleasing to the eye. It is really a handsome piece of furniture. It incorporates an automatic record player and the pick-up is of the new light-weight type as used on the Decola. I was thinking of the price of the Beau Decca, for it is really most reasonable. It can be purchased for £129 without Radio, but provision has been made for a wireless receiver, which can be easily fitted, as soon as it is ready, at an additional cost of £30-9-2. Music lovers would welcome such a wonderful Music Maker as the Beau Decca in the home. What a splendid thing to purchase, and I am happy to extend Hire-Purchase facilities to those who feel they would like to take advantage of them. Do please write for particulars, or call and hear it.

FRED SMITH

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those that embarrass. All these carry us half way to enjoyment, but the rest of the way we have to forgo or accomplish ourselves. How English! is the usual aid in these cases. Like *The First Gentleman*, this comedy deserves well but might perform a good deal better.

The blight on entertainment is not by any means confined to English films. American comedies, with or without music, are as bad at the moment, and worse. An easy touch is what I miss to-day. Where are the many screen things that used to be fun? The knockabout has become sheer murder, the lovelies are become huskies or bombshells, Chaplin manages a sad shrug, all the invention has gone out of Disney. To revive the days when slapstick and sentiment were not irreconcilable, the Tatler offers us again *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek*, Preston Sturges's second-best film. Do you remember Ratskywatsky? If not, journey to the Tatler and discover.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

SAFETY CURTAIN

SIR,—Most of us are watching the undignified squabbling in Berlin with a mixture of shame and alarm. It is unworthy of adult minds and out of it may come only too easily an incident that will start the shooting war. So long as we confine our outlook to this single issue, no tolerable solution is in sight. It is too late to withdraw voluntarily from Berlin, while to be driven out would involve a ruinous loss of prestige. Worse still, it would expose the Berliners, who have trusted us, to a ruthless persecution. It would be easy to draw up on paper a reasonable *modus vivendi*, which would allow this city to govern itself, while assuring both to its garrison and its inhabitants their communications with the West. But why should the Russians consent to such a settlement, while all the cards in this sordid game are manifestly in their hands?

There is, however, another possible approach to this anxious question. So long as we isolate it, we shall get nowhere. But by linking it with other disputes where West clashes with East, we might, by a process of give and take, arrange a balanced truce —what you have called "an agreement to disagree." The aim would be to define our respective spheres of interest, a proposal first made by Mr. Seymour Cocks and a group of Labour Members. It would be useless to include in the agenda of these negotiations any of the major questions that divide us—the veto in the Security Council, the control of atomic energy, the future of the Dardanelles and the unity of Germany. Our purpose should be to secure not yet a lasting peace, but a breathing space, a cooling-off period. If we can stop interfering with one another all the way round the map from Korea to Berlin, the iron curtain may become a safety curtain, that staves off the conflagration we both have reason to dread.

The urgent and dangerous questions are many and some of them are complicated. Only the first step is obvious and easy. We shall expect from the Kremlin the acceptance of the Western Union as an accomplished fact. Let us on our side renounce every species of interference, whether by official protests, propaganda or intrigue, in Russia's East European Zone. I call this renunciation easy, because the record shows that our interventions have defeated our own ends, driven the Communists to violent measures and exposed our friends to their vengeance. Our rule for the future should be to confine our relations with Russia's allies to the promotion of trade. Next on the agenda stands Austria, where it looks as if peace can be won at the cost of financial aid to balance the claims of the Kremlin. At Trieste a compromise may be feasible. In Greece could the Cominform be induced to discourage the civil war, in return for a total armistice, the participation of the Left in the administration and the withdrawal by a fixed date of our troops? The Americans would certainly have the right to demand a cessation of Moscow's bellicose propaganda. Would they be sorry to stop their subsidies to Chiang Kai-shek, whom all their experts have condemned? An understanding would be eased if Russia were allowed to buy a quota of the oil of the Middle East. Finally, as an item in this stand-still agreement, the friction in Berlin should be ended and its communications re-opened. These are no more than tentative suggestions, designed to bring about a *détente* in the present tension. If, with American consent, a special British mission were sent to Moscow to negotiate, the ideal man to head it would be Lord Mountbatten.

The present moment seems to me favourable for such an attempt. The West, by the adoption of the Marshall Plan, American re-armament and the creation in principle of the Western Union, has affirmed so clearly its will and ability to survive, that it can afford to take the first steps towards a *détente*. If we make no effort to check the drift towards war, it may overtake us sooner than we expect. History and experience warn us that two groups of Powers cannot indefinitely indulge in public quarrelling, mutual frustration and competitive re-armament without stumbling eventually into war. Sooner or later, while it measures out retaliation against provocation, one side or the other will miscalculate. It is easy to argue that neither dare risk an early war. A contrary reckoning is equally plausible. Twice the older among us have lived through this nightmare of an armed and angry peace, and we know how it ends.

H. N. BRAILSFORD

MOUNTAIN AND GIRONDE

SIR,—In his article, "The Gods are Athirst," Mr. Kingsley Martin seems to imply that compromise could often have been achieved in the past by the moderates or "liberals," without the historical necessity for fanaticism or violence. His special pleading, however, does not entitle him to strain his interpretation of events to the point of distortion. Without wishing to become involved in the ideological controversy, I suggest that the significance of the historical processes, cited by the author, is more accurately described below.

1. In the 16th and early 17th centuries, the Protestant communities of Europe rightly saw no possibility of compromise with the Catholic counter-Reformation, except on its own terms—return to the Catholic fold. Surely it was militant Protestantism, meeting violence with violence, that saved England from the Spanish Armada, Holland from the fanatical fury of Philip II, French Huguenots from the lethal domination of the Guise faction? Queen Elizabeth (who was nearly assassinated by counter-Reformation agents) knew this; so did William the Silent (who was assassinated in this way). True, when the counter-Reformation had temporarily spent its strength, Henry IV of France and James of England could pose as mediators between the two religious extremes, but neither would have been in a position to do so but for the conviction of many Protestants that their cause was worth fighting and dying for. In all probability, neither would have been alive. Similarly, the Thirty Years' War devastated Germany because, initially, the leaders of the counter-Reformation rejected compromise, and attempted afresh the forcible reconversion of Protestant Europe. Were the Protestant Bohemians, Lutherans, and Gustavus Adolphus mistaken in their courageous resistance, or does not posterity (at least in Northern Europe) remember them with gratitude?

2. From 1792 to 1794, Revolutionary France was in mortal danger, because the counter-revolutionary forces of Prussia, Austria, and the French émigrés, had allied together to attack France and destroy the achievements of the Revolution. Admittedly France, under a Ministry which included Girondists, took the first step in declaring war on Austria in April, 1792, but this simply anticipated an inevitable intervention by Austria and Prussia in French affairs.

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The Gironde could neither stem the advance of the invaders, nor bring themselves to break irrevocably with the King and his entourage, the focus of the counter-revolution within France. How could this "Third Force," the Gironde, have effected a compromise with the confident, invading counter-revolution, except by capitulation and the abandonment of all that the revolutionaries had won? The Mountain were driven progressively to establish the First Republic, and later the Terror, in order to save France. It was the "levée en masse," with Citizen Carnot as its leader and inspirer, that distinguished the Mountain as the saviours of the Revolution. The Gironde could never have been so realist or so bold. The compromise arrived at under the Directory was only possible because the Jacobin fanatics had eliminated the "fifth column" inside France, had cleared French soil of foreign armies, and had carried the war into the territory of the enemy. The adhesion of Britain and Spain to the coalition of the enemies of the Republic in 1793 was a factor which rendered a fanatical resistance even more necessary, if revolutionary France was to survive. It is no mere coincidence that the Terror came to an end, as soon as the grave emergency was over, and the success of the Revolution assured.

What the "via media" school of compromise tend to forget is that the use of force is often dictated to the would-be moderates by the prior aggression of their enemies. If they do not accept that challenge, they are doomed; or at least they often have been in the past. The melancholy story of the Weimar Republic is an instructive warning that "sweet reasonableness" seldom prevails against an opposition which is single-minded and tough. In fact, the history of the last two decades should have finally taught all good Europeans the lesson that compromise should be abandoned when it begins to be appeasement.

5 Derwentwater Terrace, Leeds, 6. J. L. DOBSON

SIR,—I do not know whether to regard Mr. Robertson's letter as laughable or tragic. In one and the same breath he denies that his political creed implies an abandonment of reason and tolerance, and then proceeds to explain that his species of toleration extends only to those people and views with which he agrees. For Heaven's sake, what sort of toleration is this? I agree that it makes the practice of this particular virtue easy, but only by removing all that goes to make it a virtue.

It is, of course, a good practice to fix one's eyes on a goal, and to make for it, but cannot Mr. Robertson see that new circumstances may arise and require modification both of ends and means, and that this is not necessarily a descent into the mire of "reaction," "opportunism," "careerism" or what have you? If only he and his like would submit their own motives and beliefs to one-tenth of the searching criticism which they direct upon the beliefs of their opponents, they might come to realise that they have no monopoly of sincerity.

DEREK E. HODGSON

Jesus College, Cambridge.

CATHOLICS AND POLITICS

SIR,—Mr. Arnold Lunn's letter makes it quite plain that he is a very important person in Roman Catholic activities. But I cannot see that it throws much light on the point under discussion—which is simply this: whether the Church does, or does not, intervene in politics. I may remind Mr. Lunn that a Catholic started this correspondence with the assertion that the Church is solely concerned with religion and does not meddle with politics—an assertion which seemed to me a complete falsification of European history during the last thousand years.

To find out the Church's teaching on any point, one must go to the fountain-head. That is why I cited two 20th-century catechisms, one by the Redemptorist, Father Philippe, the other by the Spanish Jesuit, Father Ripalda. Not, of course, that catechisms are always a safe guide even as regards Catholic doctrine, for there is the celebrated case of Keenan's Irish catechism which, up to the very eve (1869) of the Vatican decrees, maintained that Papal Infallibility was "a Protestant invention." So that one has to be wary. "*Surtout, méfiez-vous des sources*," as Bishop Dupanloup put it—and the saying, by the way, gains an added piquancy from the fact (vouched for by Lord Acton, *Correspondence*, page 50) that the good bishop had never even set eyes on a Greek Testament.

The two catechisms, however, from which I quoted have the personal blessing and approval of the Pope, and special "indulgences" are granted to those who use them. As Mr. Lunn is fond of posing as an authority on Franco's Spain I would particularly urge him to get a copy of Ripalda. It is really rich. He will find (pp. 72-84) that what we are accustomed to regard as the basic freedoms—freedom of conscience, freedom of the press, etc.—are deadly and damnable errors; that to vote for a Liberal (and *a fortiori* for a Socialist, Syndicalist, or Communist) is a sin against faith; in fact—and this is the long and the short of it—if you want to know what periodicals to read and which way to vote, you should consult your Father Confessor. HAROLD BINNS

21 East Avenue, Bournemouth.

SIR,—Mr. Arnold Lunn believes that Protestant schools exist in the Province of Quebec by permission, and at the expense, of the Roman Catholic majority in the province. He is apparently ignorant of the following:

(1) The Roman Catholic schools in the Province of Quebec exist as a result of the tolerance of that British Government which, passing the Quebec Act, 1774, granted the French-speaking subjects free exercise of their religion.

(2) The two school systems of the Province are financed by separate taxation of the two communities, Roman Catholic taxpayers paying for their schools, non-Roman Catholics for theirs.

K. M. C. MACINTYRE

113 Eyre Court, N.W.8

SIR,—My own complaint against Mr. Lunn, in the present matter, is not that he is ignorant, but that he is not frank and honest. He must, for instance, have known, when he first wrote to you, that the Liberals had been condemned by the Popes, not only for their expropriation of church property and other offences, but also for their liberalism itself. He must know, too, that the issue is not that Eire is "fully entitled" to grant rights to Protestants, but that, according to Catholic teaching, she is equally "entitled" not to grant rights to Protestants.

As to St. Thomas Aquinas—the difficulty is that he did not concede to subjects of the church (i.e. to the baptised) the rights he conceded to infidels and Jews. He taught that heretics were to be exterminated from the world by death.

Like Mr. Lunn, "I prefer facts to theorising." Our only experience of the fact of a Catholic world is the Catholic society of the Middle Ages. That society taught and practised the persecution of heretics for centuries.

As Mr. Lunn argues from a private discussion between himself and Cardinal Griffin, may I be permitted to mention a triangular correspondence I happen to have seen between Cardinal Griffin, Rev. Dr. E. C. Messenger and Dr. Alfred O'Rahilly about the question of "parental rights." If the three correspondents will print this extraordinary correspondence the public will at last have the materials before them for forming an opinion about the Catholic attitude to "parental rights." Dr. Messenger had written to the *Catholic Herald* that Dr. O'Rahilly had been guilty of "grave theological error" in his *Catholic Herald* review (January 24th, 1947) of the pamphlet "Is the Roman Catholic Church a Secret Society?" Cardinal Griffin was informed and wrote to Dr. Messenger. The upshot was that Dr. Messenger

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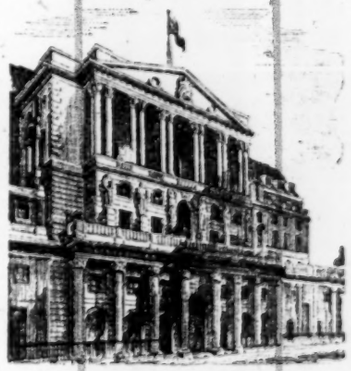

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withdrew his *Catholic Herald* letter at the Cardinal's request. Then followed a heated triangular correspondence, which, if given to the public, will reveal much of the truth about Catholics and parental rights.

JOHN V. SIMCOX

84, West Side, Clapham Common, S.W.4

HOW MANY BABIES?

SIR,—Miss Estcourt's main point would appear to be that "the position of the primary producer countries is becoming steadily stronger"; so we as an industrial nation should reduce our population and give up our "melancholy and futile export drive."

At the moment it is true the so-called terms of trade have gone against us.

But we must remember (1) the effects of war and its aftermath on primary production in Europe, the Far East and elsewhere, and (2) that between the wars the terms of trade swung the other way. There is no reason why they should not do so again.

The greatest pessimists have never suggested we should grow all our own food, let alone raw materials. Under no conceivable circumstances can we live except by exchanging manufactures and services for primary products. In doing this we are more likely to be successful with a stable population of balanced age groups than with a declining one carrying the swollen numbers of aged men and women that such a condition involves.

Further, in these days of power politics our economy is very closely connected with our political standing in the world. A Britain that was wedded to a policy of depopulation could hardly expect to carry much weight in international affairs. L. J. CADBURY

The Davids, Northfield, Birmingham.

ERITREA AND SOMALIA

SIR,—After the first world war the barbarity and reactionary tendencies of the Turkish administration were proclaimed in all quarters in order to bring about the dissolution of the Turkish Empire. The reformers carried the day; the empire was dismembered and one of the most tragic legacies of this act is with us now, becoming increasingly more ghastly after thirty years.

Exactly the same arguments of maladministration are now being advanced to bring about the dissolution of the Italian Empire. The reformers have learnt nothing; there is the same talk of trusteeships and eventual independence—with this exception, however, that now the plans envisaged are even more irresponsible.

According to one suggestion Somalia and Eritrea are to be handed over bag and baggage to Ethiopia, a country which up to extremely recent times has rightly enjoyed a most evil administrative reputation. Whatever reforms may have been introduced there, they cannot possibly have had the time to take lasting effect; nor is it in the least known what influence a future sovereign of that country will have upon the administration. Another suggestion is that after a brief period of trusteeship—the Somalis have suggested a ten-year maximum for a United Somalia—Eritrea and Somalia should become completely independent. This is a project from which anyone who knows the countries and the people must recoil in horror.

In the case of the Turkish Empire it came to be frankly admitted that the Turks knew a great deal more about Oriental administration than the reformers, and the liberated Arabs are now of the opinion that their national aspirations would not to-day have been in a worse position under Turkish rule. Much has been said about the danger of the people in the Italian colonies becoming pawns in a game of power politics: the real danger is that they may become tragic victims of colonial experiments and ideological battles. R. H. A. MERLIN

AN ISSUE OF CONSCIENCE

SIR,—In your issue of April 24th, Crossman, in his review of Parliament, somewhat maliciously asserts that, in countering Skeffington Lodge's interjection I "assured *the Tories* that there were an awful lot of my colleagues for whose consciences I would not care to vouch." May I say that my assurance was given to the House of Commons as such, and not to any individual party therein.

He follows this by a subtle reference to the crypto-Tory as opposed to the crypto-Communist. I claim to be a crypto-nothing, and to guard no one's conscience, not even Crossman's—that might be too formidable a task—but I am willing to be judged by my record in the industrial and political movements of the Left over the past twenty-five years, and if necessary to have it compared with that of my critic.

House of Commons. CECIL POOLE

POLISH PRESS

SIR,—Your anonymous Warsaw correspondent assures us that "uneasiness is felt (by the Poles) about any Western Union, as it would be about any Western organisation which seemed to be anti-Soviet in its content"; that, "Poles of all shades of opinion—including Catholic newspapers which seldom express agreement with the Government—argue that any coalition directed against the Soviet Union will in the end devour them"; that "the Poles have learned to feel quite secure with the Soviet Union on their border." And still more, "To substitute the uncertain advantages of Marshall Aid for the now certain advantages brought to his government by Mr. Minc, the Minister of Industry and a member of the Polish Workers Party, would seem a most precarious gamble to any Pole . . ."

These startling revelations about the political mood of the Poles (not of the small ruling Communist group, the "Polish Workers Party") are based on the opinions expressed by the press in Poland. But surely your Warsaw correspondent ought to know that the whole Polish press is made politically absolutely uniform by the State ownership, headed by Mr. T. Zabludowski, who as my school-mate joined the Communist movement more than twenty years ago. The few Catholic weeklies can still disagree with the Communists on the question of philosophy but not on political matters. LUCJAN BLIT

London, N.10.

THE COUNTRYSIDE

SIR,—In a recent note Critic implied that the only organisations fighting to protect the countryside from "ill-conceived and often ruinously destructive development" are the C.P.R.E., the National Trust and the Friends of the Lake District, and that "Ramblers and Youth Hostels and the Cyclists Touring Club" are neither supporting those organisations nor doing anything themselves. This is very far from the truth. The Ramblers' Association, for many years past, has been a constituent part of the C.P.R.E. It has representatives on the Council of the National Trust and on the Standing Committee on National Parks and several other amenity societies are closely associated with us in one way or another. Moreover, we do a very large amount of work ourselves. We have strenuously opposed many of the military claims on the countryside, harmful commercial activities, excessive tree-felling, unsightly advertisement hoardings and all the other disasters that can mar the beauty of Britain. Letters and deputations to Ministers, public meetings, representation at public inquiries, appeals to M.P.s—in these and other ways we have for years past helped those who wish to save something of our landscape heritage. I can only speak for one organisation, but I happen to know that others rebuked by Critic are doing admirable work of a similar kind. L. E. MORRIS,

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE art of writing bad English does not come naturally. It has to be acquired like any other art and begins, as also many first novels do, with the earliest assertion of adult personality. Sir Ernest Gowers, in a brilliant pamphlet: *Plain Words** which is written for the guidance of the Civil Service, says that bad writing starts when we put on airs; but we inflate ourselves by slang in speech and by pompous sentences in writing, surely because we are afraid and seek a convention that will protect us and make us like everyone else. Any professional writer can remember the time when he sat at his desk and was able to put down only the plainest words, the simplest sentences; he hankered after a style, for he had the impression that his wretched string of words was like an exiguous and sordid towel he was frantically pulling this way and that to cover his nakedness. And there (he will recall) how he hit upon the solution: journalese, commercialese, officialese the chief clerk's manner, the Old Boys' prose came towards him, rolling its experienced hips with the ease of a whore. At once he was saved; presently he was begging to state, inclining to think, definitely rehabilitating, wallowing in his alternatively, comparatively, and unduly; and soon he was advancing towards those refinements of administrative utterance where a Minister promises "to explore an avenue," or refuses to do so because "it would open a very serious door" or "enlarge a far-reaching bottleneck." The only bother for the professional writer was that, if he went on like this, he would lose his job.

Not so the official, the administrator, the politician or the business man. For him these formulae have often been a convenient ritual. In one respect they have truthfully reflected a fundamental peculiarity of affairs. Everyone must remember, when he left school or university, his naive surprise that the world of affairs is governed by fear and suspicion, and that every transaction must be enclosed in safeguards, cautions, evasions and sanctions. In business the meeting of seller and buyer is like the approach of two stiff-legged, stiff-tailed dogs, alert with hostility and panic. What a delusion that this is the moment for precision. As Walter Bagehot once said, the mind of the businessman may be precise in some respects, but in general it prefers a surrounding twilight where outlines are blurred and where possibility rather than fact can emerge. In this uncertain atmosphere, formula is indispensable and the pursuit of formula is the impulse within bad writing. To those who fail in this pursuit and who go their own freethinking way there is the poor comfort of those lines in *Macbeth* which, according to Sir Ernest Gowers, have provided a private joke well-known among Civil Servants:

> Bloody instructions which being sent return
> To plague th'inventor.

That is the best I can do in defence of bad writing in the business of life. It is, one notices, mainly the work of the educated, the most nervous of the social groups; it indicates their vested interest; and has looked, to the outsider, like a religious imposition similar to the repetition of the Koran. It saves time, ensures authority and conceals meaning. But lately there have been many protests against this kind of writing, and the Civil Service especially has been blamed for literary crimes which, in fact, have become just as common in journalism, in private administration and, above all, in totalitarian politics. (There are certain words, like democracy, liberty, progress, justice, whose meaning has been destroyed by totalitarians, and which no writer can use now with any certainty of being understood. Similarly, as Mr. George Orwell pointed out, words like "liquidate" have been inverted to conceal the acts of killing and false imprisonment. And we might add words like "displaced," "elements," not to mention the lurid "beasts" and "reactionaries," which have been misused in order to conceal from the public the iniquities that a government is committing.) The conscious abuse of words and the use of jargon in ordinary affairs is, no doubt, less cynical than it is in politics; there may be a desire to hoodwink the great public in it, but it looks far more like a symptom of breakdown: the administrator is administrating other administrators and is operating in a void. Even the attack upon bad English is not disinterested when it is turned upon the Civil Service alone; and here Sir Ernest Gowers' excellent pamphlet is very sound. Confining himself to what is called "officialese," he sets out the limits, the duties of official English; distinguishes, for example, between the English that is addressed to other departments, legal English and the interpretative English that ought to be addressed to the public; exposes sins, and suggests the path of reformation with good nature and sound, simple learning. His little book ought to be read by every man or woman who has to write a minute, a report, a speech or a regulation; and, in case there is any holier-than-thou feeling among the rest of us, it would be a good thing if we all read it.

For what is really behind this pamphlet is a revolution in language which is following the social revolutions of our time. Our lives are now intricately organised from above:

> Consider the small shopkeeper. Like everyone else, he must have a working knowledge of the rationing regulations appropriate to his business and his household, of the Finance Acts, that govern his and his employees' tax liability, and of the legislation determining his and their duties in respect of the Health, Pensions and Unemployment Services. But for that for him is only the beginning. He must also know that, on pain of committing a criminal offence, he must not (subject to certain rather complicated exceptions) keep his shop open later than a certain hour on four days in the week, a different hour on the fifth, and yet a different one on the sixth, or open it at all on Sundays; that he must give his assistants a half-holiday every week; that if an assistant is under 18, his hours of work are limited by statute and his right to a weekly half-holiday is slightly different; that if the assistant is a girl she must be given a seat and allowed to sit on it; that the ventilation, lighting and temperature of his shop, as well as its sanitary accommodation must be "suitable and sufficient" . . . and so on.

The new fact is that the traditional mysteries of State language break down when all need to understand them. In the past, as Sir Ernest Gowers says, the official was warned against interpreting the law; the Courts were there for that; the obscurity of the official phrase was, in a sense, an indication of the rights of the individual, and the official felt very much as the scientist still does about the popularisation of science. The official can afford that defence no longer. If the new planner cannot master the two essentials of writing: to state a meaning simply and to affect the reader precisely as he wishes—and in this art there is no greater master of homely positiveness and persuasion than Swift, whom Sir Ernest frequently quotes, I am glad to see—his plans will break down, consume each other or arouse the resentment of a bored and angry public. Such a sentence (quoted by Sir Ernest) as:

> Sub-contractors may need re-authorisation not only of sub-authorisations already given for period II and beyond, but also for sub-authorisations for earlier periods, so as to re-validate orders or parts of orders as in (I).

make us turn eagerly to the brisk, practical talk of the black market; and

> The proposals made in response to this request show differences of approach to the problem which relate to the differing recommendations of the Committee's report and include some modifications of those recommendations.

creates laughter and cynicism. How lovely to yawn one's way through life like that. It is hard to persuade us that the author of those lines is not a parasite filling up his office hours by stuffing a mattress and getting ready for a lifetime's sleep in an unnecessary job at the public expense. Compared with him the official who wrote, in another example "this does not mean, of course, that anyone can get coupons if his boots fall to pieces through ordinary wear or if he just gets a tear in his trousers" is a ray of sunshine; he could, as Sir Ernest says, have grasped the formula and said "If his garments suffer comparatively minor damage and are capable of effective reconditioning." There is literary authority for this kind of strangulation: Mrs. Nathaniel Hawthorne strangled passages of her husband's diary in a similar way, to make it more genteel; and there is long history of facetious writing in English light literature, especially of the comic sort, which has had its effect on those who have little time to think out what they are writing.

The ideas which officials are obliged to put in writing are generally dull, complex, interfering and vexatious. The official task is almost always more tiresome than anything the professional writer has to perform; and Sir Ernest's book, which is a warm defence of the Civil Servant as well as a criticism of his prose, is valuable for its excellent examples of messes cleared up. But those pages which are devoted to special words are the most interesting and alarming. Why "acquaint" when you mean "tell"? Why "adumbrate" when you wish to "sketch, outline or foreshadow"? Why "cross-section" when "sample" exists? Words like deem, commence, develop, entail, envisage, minimise, evince and eventuate are very often misused or overworked. The new jargon includes the famous "bottleneck" which is called "the largest" when the smallest must be meant, and which was once, in a daily paper "ironed out." Evacuate, emergency, global and overall provide daily horrors. The word "position" has tied up many politicians—I seem to remember it as one of Ernest Bevin's difficulties—an evening paper has this beauty from a humbler speaker:

> A position has arisen which must be thrashed out.

Why say: "The coal stocks position is very serious"? The word "position" might be banned from administrative English along with "conditions" and "situation." With them two words, "recondition" and "rehabilitate," which have simple synonyms and are used, generally, to conceal unpleasant facts: your house, your mind, your health, have been ruined by modern war. And this brings me to a moment in Sir Ernest's book where he rises to the manner of Dr. Johnson's Dictionary:

> Ideology: This word offends some purists but I do not see why it should, provided that its mesmeric influence is kept in check. Now that people can no longer care enough about religion to fight, massacre and enslave one another to secure the form of its observance, we need a word for what has taken its place as an excitant of those forms of human activity, and I know of none better.

It is the new "officialese," or what I prefer to call administrator's English, that I find harder to stomach than the footman's English, the doubly-debased Augustan of the old Civil Service. The new form of pretentiousness and euphemism springs from technics; it represents the attempt of the technical man to forget human beings and to treat them as units or marks on the graph. "Casualty" is a good example.

Those who are not grammarians or who think they have no interest in style are, nevertheless, savagely bored by pages and pages of this kind of writing; it breeds a hatred of the world we live in, if this English gives us a true picture of our world, a sensation of tiredness, unreality and the desert. If the picture is untrue, then simple human nature rebels against it with indignation. It would be disastrous if the attempt of our society to organise itself justly should convey to its members the sensation that they were the despised worker ants of the heap, to be dosed with euphemism. Fortunately, Sir Ernest Gower's wise and amusing book shows that our masters are aware of the danger. We may still go out and tear our trousers without fear of effective reconditioning; by continuing to put up a fight for clear and honest meaning we may even save ourselves from being "liquidated" in order to keep some savage ideologue's moral sense at rest.

V. S. PRITCHETT.

* *Plain Words*. By SIR ERNEST GOWERS. *H.M. Stationery Office*. 2s.

A HUMAN NIETZSCHE?

Nietzsche: The Story of a Human Philosopher. By H. A. REYBURN. *Macmillan.* 21s.

The sinking sensation induced by the sub-title to this latest study of Nietzsche increases on discovering that the author professes psychology and has even collaborated with a colleague in order to produce this book. The word "human" therefore must not be taken to mean that most philosophers are devoid of humanity, but that the present author is going to talk about maladjustment to life, frustration, compensation and sadism, although not (let us be thankful for small mercies) about algolagnic tendencies. On the assumption that prevention is better than cure, this book is certainly an antidote to Nietzsche's doctrines; for one can hardly imagine anyone wanting to read him who has read Reyburn first. And yet it is a praiseworthy effort "to see the man and his philosophy together, and to interpret them by one another." It is conscientious, thorough, painstaking and entirely unobjectionable, and yet it only succeeds in exhibiting a great genius in the light of a great bore. Moreover a further blight has been cast upon the unhappy victim by the unspeakably grisly translations:

> Just look at these superfluous ones. They steal the works of the inventors and the treasures of the wise: they call the theft culture—and everything becomes for them sickness and trouble. Just look at these superfluous ones. They are always ill, they vomit their bile and call it a newspaper. They devour one another and can't even digest themselves.
>
> Just look at these superfluous ones. They acquire wealth and become poorer thereby. Power they desire and first of all the crowbar of power, much money—these indigents.

Who would ever imagine, on reading such passages as this, that it was largely by the dynamic quality of his style that Nietzsche swept Germany off her feet? Dangerous and indeed disastrous as his doctrines proved, the fundamental reason probably lies where the failure of the present book also lies, in accepting Nietzsche as a philosopher. He is in fact almost impossible to label or to place; but he was much more truly a "lyrical satirist" scourging his times, a myth-maker and a prophet than a systematic philosopher; and the attempt to treat him as such in the present book leads one into a morass of arguments and a positive bog of inconsistencies, which clog instead of stimulating the mind. Moreover, how can one really trust the psychological penetration of a writer, who interprets the Wagner-Nietzsche relationship as superficially as the following passage shows? Speaking of the latter's uneasiness at Wagner's increasing fame and his influence among Nietzsche's own circle, Reyburn continues:

> We have already noted the discontent which this aroused, displaying itself in Nietzsche's refusal to go to Bayreuth, unless Wagner invited him as the honoured guest. On these terms, apparently, he was prepared to go; for his objection to *Parsifal* was not insuperable and could also have been overcome by the opportunity to whisper nothings in Lou Salomé's ear.

Human? Yes, all-too human; but a stricture applying rather to Reyburn than to Nietzsche himself.

As far as this thinker is concerned, he worked throughout by inspiration rather than by reason, fired in the first instance by the works of that other great myth-maker Arthur Schopenhauer (whose tragic vision of life as rendered by Reyburn is as flabby as everything else in the book); and he was certainly open to all the criticisms systematic philosophers, historians and scholars have made, and which are here faithfully repeated. They seem strangely irrelevant when considering, for instance, *The Birth of Tragedy*, which Reyburn defines as "a comprehensive book covering a variety of subjects." This work of creative criticism bristles with misleading sweeping statements and inaccuracies of all sorts; yet I doubt if anyone since Euripides has given a better notion of the Dionysian element in life and poetry, or has written more irresistibly about the greatness of tragedy as an art. It is not given to Reyburn to communicate this experience at second hand. And the same holds good of *Zarathustra*, which appears like a tissue of imbecilities when analysed by him and profusely illustrated by translations which read like uncouth parodies of the text. Rendered into English (Reyburn's English) Nietzsche's strength turns to weakness, his power to mere violence and what is strange becomes grotesque. He appears like a dwarf making the gestures of a giant: ludicrous and futile, and raving hysterically.

Nietzsche's admirers in this country will probably agree that the note of hysteria sounds at times in his more prophetic utterances, and that Reyburn's translations have magnified it to an unendurable pitch. Morally speaking, this may be poetic justice; aesthetically speaking, a great poetic injustice has been done. And perhaps this is the best way of summing up the unfavourable impression the book leaves on the student of Nietzsche. We have learned to recoil from his doctrines since we have seen where they can lead in practice. From a utilitarian point of view, from the point of view of expediency, it is perhaps not a matter for tears that they should appear in this version of them to be so deadly dull. A drop of dullness in the tumultuous sea of Nietzsche criticism is possibly no bad thing. Nevertheless Reyburn mis-represents Nietzsche entirely in his efforts to explain him psychologically and to understand him philosophically. Psychologically, he is probably beyond the reach of all of us, this intellectual giant with the fatal intellectual flaw; nor can he be adequately comprehended as a philosopher. He was attempting to create a mythology for the future, and prophesying often in apocalyptic language whither the events he saw taking place before his eyes were leading. As we know to our cost, he was prophesying accurately. What causes hostility (and could do no less) is the fact that he announced his prophesy as a doctrine rather than as a vision. Most prophets call out "Woe! Woe!" when they are vouchsafed their glimpses into the future. Nietzsche took the opposite line, and attempted to justify this: to turn a poetical experience into a moral law dependent on a philosophy. Those who have followed him along this precarious path misjudge him as completely as he misjudged himself. He was a portent of the times and a prophet, a poet who acted as a scourge; he has a bewildering number of facets; but no study that does not take full account of the mysterious element of inspiration which conditions nearly everything he wrote will ever be able to make either Nietzsche himself or his extraordinary influence comprehensible.

E. M. BUTLER

NEW NOVELS

The Harp in the South. By RUTH PARK. *Michael Joseph.* 9s. 6d.

Brother Death. By JOHN LODWICK. *Heinemann.* 9s. 6d.

Ups and Downs. By STACY AUMONIER. *Heinemann.* 10s. 6d.

A reviewer who declares that he would sooner praise than blame can have little hope of being believed; all the same, let me say straightway that the two new books listed above are not the worst novels I have read this month. The more interesting of them is *The Harp in the South*, interesting mainly because of the circumstances that attend its publication. It has won a prize of £2,000 in an Australian fiction competition and shows all the signs of becoming a best-seller here. The reasons for its success are, I think, easily ascertained. A naive work, the very artlessness of which is appealing, it has the virtue of an absolute lack of pretentiousness. It is a loosely knit story of family life in the slums of Sydney; the Darcys are Irish, poverty-stricken, Catholic and feckless. The neighbourhood in which they live is graceless in the extreme and Mrs. Park uses all the stock ingredients of novels about the slums: unemployment, drunkenness, rape, seduction, abortion, murder, everything (and perhaps this is significant) except revolutionary politics. But for all her Zoleasque material Mrs. Park is anything but Zoleasque in her attitude towards the life that she describes. She loves her characters; beneath those rough, boozy exteriors, even in the dope-peddling madame of the local brothel, she finds always hearts of gold; the effect is of rose-water sprinkled over the ugliness and sordidity basic to the novel. Her version of slum life is obviously no less true, or rather no more untrue, than, say, Steinbeck's or Caldwell's picture of poor whites at the moronic level, but it is much cosier. And how original a writer now appears who emphasises the kindliness of her characters rather than their meanness and brutality.

Altogether too sweet as it is for my taste, I found *The Harp in the South* wholly preferable to Mr. Lodwick's modish, sophisticated *Brother Death*. The hero, Rumbold, is not exactly a new character in modern fiction. See him in the street: "He clenched his fists in exasperation as a couple of women paused before him to argue. He yearned to kick their drooping buttocks." In a café: "He gazed at the girl's nose, which he himself had broken." In a Spanish train: "The heads of the nuns were nodding: their chins kissed the sober habit, beneath layers of which, beneath flannel, their useless tits were shrivelling." With a woman who has picked him up in a Madrid night club: "The eyes were green, not the colour of grapes, but that of goose droppings." Tough isn't the word for him. Yet he's cultured, one for a painting, especially if it's by "Bosch, Geronimo, fifteen this to fifteen that." Assemble the evidence: a commando who has deserted in occupied France, who has lived by exploiting the black market, who murders a small boy to oblige the child's mother whom he plans to murder, after seducing the lady's sister, a murderess: it stands to sense—the sense of contemporary fiction—that he must be a Roman Catholic. He is—"We offer the best insurance policy and don't bleat Jewish psalms on Sunday nights." *Brother Death*—you are to infer from the title that Rumbold is a death-mystic—is the psychological thriller reduced to absurdity, compounded of equal parts of Graham Greene and Hemingway horribly debased in the process. The course of crime and violence that runs through the book from its opening in France to its end with Rumbold's death in Scotland at the hands of Military Intelligence, who never did a more meritorious job, is so unmotivated as to be meaningless. I do not know Mr. Lodwick's earlier novels, but it is only charity to assume they are better than this.

One turns with relief to the new edition of Stacy Aumonier's stories, *Ups and Downs*. Aumonier died in 1928 at the age of forty-one. He was not, I fancy, ever a success with the highbrows of his day and to-day he is almost forgotten, remembered if at all only as a successful writer of popular magazine stories, magazine in this context meaning a periodical which gives its writers an adequate return for their labours without any damned nonsense about literary merit. He was much more than that. Probably the writer he most nearly resembles is Bennett; he has all the older man's delight in idiosyncrasy, and a warm human sympathy for those people whom we call ordinary because their lives are neither spectacular nor dramatic. He has, too, Bennett's solidity. But he is a better short story writer; his prose is swifter, more economical, and unmarred by the facetiousness which Bennett could never resist. Like Bennett, in his own field he is a most satisfying writer, and his range of material is wide. The thirty-four stories collected here include some of his best work; at least two of them, it seems to me, are masterpieces of the art of the short story: the long story "The Happy Man" and the remarkable study of two old soaks "The Friends," which Galsworthy in his introduction to this volume justly compared with Maupassant at his best.

WALTER ALLEN

NEO-KEYNES

The Conquest of Unemployment. By E. Victor Morgan. Britain in the Future Series. *Sampson, Low, Marston.* 7s. 6d.

It has not taken long to transmute the once heady wine of Keynes' theory of employment into the pure milk of economic orthodoxy. Professor Morgan belongs to an academic generation to whom it all seems quite obvious and straightforward, and his exposition is simple, clear and uncombative. He is thus excellently well equipped to provide an introduction for the common reader who approaches the subject without preconceptions, and he is admirably free from the patronising pomposity which often besets professors writing for laymen. There could be no better guide, for instance, to the ideas which are the basis of Sir Stafford Cripps' Budget speech or to the merits of the cheap-money controversy.

Accepting the need for a national employment policy does not necessarily entail a radical departure from *laisser-faire* philosophy. Professor Morgan belongs to the group of economists who use Keynes's methods of analysis to shore up the breach which Keynes made in the ramparts of traditional doctrine. His discussion of Socialism is quite disarmingly one-sided. Various dangers of Socialism are brought forward without any mention of defects on the other side. He fears, for instance, that planners may be tempted to rig the market so that consumers are not provided with what they most want, but he says nothing about the manipulation of demand by advertisement. We are even provided with an example of a Socialist enterprise sacrificing natural resources for the sake of a quick return without any suggestion that such things could happen in the pursuit of private profit.

The only merit permitted to Socialism is that it would facilitate the avoidance of unemployment. But, Professor Morgan argues, unemployment can be avoided without it. If a country has ample foreign reserves, it is possible to secure full employment, by the use of budgetary techniques, under a policy of free trade abroad and free enterprise at home. Unfortunately this line of argument, however seductive, is scarcely relevant, here and now, for the ample foreign reserves are just what is missing. Under *laisser-faire* the remedy for a deficit in the balance of trade is a sufficient fall in activity and in consumption to cut down imports. The problem confronting us now is to find an alternative.

Some experiments in post-war *laisser-faire* are being made in Europe at present. A press correspondent in Italy recently described how the unemployed standing at street corners recalled the atmosphere of South Wales in 1932. Another, from Paris, remarks that, while the workers eat no meat, the well-to-do are causing new health problems by over-indulgence. In this country all parties are more or less committed to preserving full employment and some semblance of "equality of sacrifice." That entails national planning of imports. It is to this terrain that the argument has now shifted. How far can a planned import programme be combined with *laisser-faire* in other respects?

This question Professor Morgan scarcely touches. His little book, therefore, is not quite a tract for the times. All the same it will be extremely useful in carrying the layman, for whom it is intended, through one stage of the argument that he must master in forming an enlightened opinion on the issues being debated around him.

Even Professor Morgan's mild advocacy of employment policy is just a little too strong for Sir John Anderson, who writes a brief preface to the book. Sir John sees some connection between the trade cycle and Newton's third law of motion, and fears that to maintain a continuous high level of employment might be a dangerous interference with the laws of nature.

Joan Robinson

TOWN PLANS

Oxford Replanned. Thomas Sharp. *The Architectural Press.* 15s.

Architects' Year Book. Editor Jane Drew. *Paul Elek.* 35s.

It is wholly characteristic of the wayward, wanton natures of the Oxford Dons that they should have made the proposal to cut a road through Merton Field the focus of their criticism of Mr. Sharp's plan for Oxford and the subject of a lively correspondence in *The Times*. Characteristic, too, that it should be Mr. Sharp's plans which rouse them to fight and not, for example, the projects of the Gas Company who have been moving for a couple of years to get their plans approved by Parliament. The gasworks, which already blight the Folly Bridge and Speedwell Street area—a mere four hundred yards south-west of Christ Church—are to be enriched by a ruggedly conceived vertical retort house 130 feet high, and some new gasholders 160 feet high . . . but who cares since the project concerns the twilight zone south of George Street and west of Carfax, a neighbourhood in which the Gas Company, Mr. Sharp, or the devil himself, can do what they severally fancy for all the University cares. No one would have gathered from *The Times* correspondence that Mr. Sharp suggests razing almost everything in this block, eight hundred yards square more or less, and recreating it as the civic, business, and shopping centre which the town needs so badly. The Dons do not care about that sort of thing: they are doing such vitally important work for civilisation as a whole, and are so conscious of the fact that they can never remember that their day-to-day status is that of one-tenth of an industrial community with its living to earn. By an historical accident the University has developed on the spot where logic and necessity would put the heart of the industrial community, so that it now has the civic function of an intolerable nuisance. Mr. Sharp's proposals solve the problem of the ossified heart by providing the artificial centre west of Carfax and by cutting new roads to feed it and to divert its traffic from the Cornmarket, St. Aldates and the High Street. If properly executed the proposals should make the University zone of the town almost as quiet as a cathedral close, and at the same time unify the disjointed sprawl in which the 90,000 people of non-University Oxford live and make it a City. Merton Field is a small price to pay for reconciling the opposed interests of the town and the University, and though it is a small thing to surrender it plays a large part in the suggested plan.

But for all its functional brilliance the plan has its defects, the most important being concerned with the future size of the town. Its community is developing and the logical expansion of the Morris works and their dependencies—in the way of public utilities, supply services, and so on—will in the end take the population up to some 200,000—roughly double its present size. This development should be planned for, and, no doubt, would have been but for a golden dream that was put in the shape of a brass tack by Sir Miles Thomas just before the late war. He told the corporation that unless more houses were built for the Nuffield workers the works themselves might have to be moved elsewhere. Since old Oxford's view of Cowley was very much Cato's view of Carthage this was asking for it, and the threat now appears as the corner stone of Mr. Sharp's industrial proposals. Sir

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Miles Thomas and all his works are to be sent to—oh, Coventry, Birmingham, or anywhere else you like—and the vacuum is to be filled with a variety of light engineering enterprises. When all is over and done with Oxford will have shrunk back to a pre-war population of some 85,000. Mr. Sharp builds a strong case for this procrustean proceeding, but his arguments are all in the end defeatist. In the past Oxford has suffered severely from its focus of economic interest on a single employer and a single industry: when slumps came all the eggs were in one basket. But to accept the recurrence of that disadvantage is to plan for the defeat of planning. In any case the baby will not vanish even if put on another doorstep, and the problems presented by the scale of operations of the big modern specialist plants cannot be solved by posting them about. The problem of Cowley can be temporarily dodged by grouping it with Coventry's problems, it can only be solved in Cowley. It is difficult, too, to be impressed by the suggestion that the University would be swamped by the further expansion of Industrial Oxford; probably no other age but ours could have suggested that the vitality of an expanding community could threaten its intellectual life. The late Sir Michael Sadler argued, on the analogy of the relative importance of the Universities at Berlin and Halle, Paris and Montpelier, Rome and Bologna, that Oxford and Cambridge were bound to decline in importance and give way to London since the communities of which they were part were too small to sustain them in full vigour. The University might gain enormously by the expansion of Cowley, but by getting its way and ostracising motor cars it seems to stand to gain nothing, unless it considers the status of a second-rate provincial university a gain.

Other defects of a minor character appear when the plan is translated from its abstract form as a schematic block into detailed street plans and models. In model form the proposals for the new quarter west of Carfax have the look of a set of Swedish Architectural clichés picnicking in a public park; and in the street plans, a wealth of slack curves and weak serpentines successfully disguise the fact that Mr. Sharp is offering sound solutions to clearly realised problems. The contrast between these drafts and those of Mr. Lock's Middlesbrough Plan, reproduced in Messrs Elek's second Architectural Year Book, is most striking. Mr. Lock has the advantage of working over a street plan which is almost as straightforward as the favourite American rectangular grid, but what gives his plan its strength is its urban character. It looks like a town, and its wide straight streets have a dignity that relates them at once to such fine things as the Carriére at Nancy; it has style. Mr. Sharp has unfortunately decided that what gives Oxford its character is not the fine architecture of the University buildings but the happy accidental effects of their juxtaposition with mean buildings in little alleys. On the strength of this theory he adopts an informal *sans façon* approach and disowns any intention of making noble groups of buildings or fine streets, and when brutal necessity forces a spectacular square on him (at the now depressing Macfisheries Corner) he apologises and points out that where other road junctions have forced squares on him he has with great art made them asymmetrical and indistinguishable from the chance junctions of packhorse lanes and sheep walks. One would like to see Mr. Sharp's brilliant abstract suggestions restated in the incisive and direct terms of the Middlesbrough Plan and given the appropriate urban feeling.

The Middlesbrough Plan is described in the enlightened and enlightening town-planning symposium in Messrs. Elek's Year Book along with stimulating contributions from Mr. Alvar Aalto, Maxwell Fry, and Ernst May. Among other good things the book contains a fascinating account of the possibilities of Shell Concrete Construction, an account of recent Swedish Architecture, and on the lighter side gives full details of a witty parody of the extreme modern style, featuring a large pyramid, which was entered in the Crystal Palace competition.

ANTHONY WEST

THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

Chaucer and the Fifteenth Century. H. S. BENNETT. *Oxford University Press.* 15s.

The fifteenth century is generally supposed to be a kind of slack in the tide of English letters, when the best of the Middle Ages has ebbed away, and the flood of the Renaissance has not yet begun to flow; a period of unreadable writers, some imitating the past, but in the manner of epigones, even of decadents, reducing what had once been fresh and forceful conventions to the dead level of automatic formulae: others laying the groundwork of the future, but as remote forerunners and precursors of the great age, praiseworthy and diligent, deserving the patronising salute which they often win from the literary historian, and the total neglect of the common reader. And there is enough truth in this supposition to make it very unlikely that the common reader would ever do anything else. Indeed it would be inhuman and unrealistic to suggest that he ought to know more about the century, at any rate by reading for himself. A few lyrics, perhaps, since *The Nut-Brown Maid* is one of them, a little Henryson, especially for those whose taste in poetry is influenced by Scottish patriotism, and the four or five lines of Lydgate that serve to prove him as bad as he is said to be, and to get a kind of touchstone of badness in poetry for all time; as for the prose, Malory of course, as the only writer of the century worth reading for himself, and a page or two of Pecock for those specially interested in religious history, or the growth of a fit prose: but that is all the common reader knows or needs to know. And with that, he would be unusually well read.

On the other hand, because it is the nodal point of the transition between mediaeval and modern, when the beginnings of the new show green through the endings of the old, the common reader would do well to know rather more of its general tenor, and the more serious student of the course of literature must pay to it a really thoughtful attention. Most of the grand errors that make past literature difficult to understand and present literature difficult to write, arise from our habit of ignoring bad writers and barren periods, of finding our way through the countries of the mind with a map that shows nothing but peaks and summits. We forget how many bad writers must go to make one good writer, and upon what painful preparations the achievements of the great ages must be based. And so we are too easily impatient with our own time, expecting too much, tolerating too little and discouraging its writers from using their predecessors profitably, and from bearing in mind their successors.

Against these errors, the study of the fifteenth century is good medicine. Taken with doses of the earlier sixteenth, it would almost cure the disease of imagining the Elizabethan age as an immaculate conception of sheer genius, not begotten of human agency, miraculous and therefore unrepeatable. It is, however, a medicine to be taken from a bottle, carefully prescribed and made up by someone who knows all the possible ingredients in detail, and able to use them in proportions that will give a mixture both useful and palatable. It is, in fact, a period that ought to be better known; but unlike any other period

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at any rate in English literature, it is better studied in a literary history than from the original texts. Probably that is why Mr. Bennett has been able to make such a good literary history of it.

The volume is Part Two of Volume Two in the *Oxford History of English Literature*, and Mr. Bennett has been left only certain aspects of the century, some of its choicest plums having already gone to Sir Edmund Chambers, the author of Part One of the same Volume. By way of compensation, however, he has been given Chaucer from the fourteenth century. At first sight, it might seem that this division of functions was a shifty editorial compromise in a boundary-dispute that never ought to have arisen. But it is really something much more sensible than this. Sir Edmund has been given those aspects of the period, both in prose and verse, that most clearly look backward to the Middle Ages; he has dealt with most of the Arthurian material, and above all with those writers who are mediaeval in the sense that they are anonymous, lost in the crowd that made the folk literature of prose, verse and drama. Mr. Bennett has been given in the main those writers who look forward, because they are more or less definite individuals and individualities, and it was very right to let him start from Chaucer, the first English writer who has the very unmediaeval capacity to be studied in the round, both as a man and as a literary artist. Mr. Bennett's study of him is remarkably complete, and manages to compress into reasonably brief compass the vast mass of research which has centred on him, especially in America, in the last forty years. He pays special attention to Chaucer's relation with his patrons and readers; very rightly, for central to the whole book is this theme of the emergence of a new kind of reading public and a new kind of writer, no longer an anonymous minstrel, but an enterprising individualist. The theme is surveyed systematically in a separate chapter, which gives a most useful summary of what is now known on the subject, but it is also present, by implication and occasional reference, in the chapters on fifteenth-century verse and prose, giving to the whole book an underlying unity of subject, and emphasising what is certainly the most important aspect of the century. Most weighty of the later portraits is a full assessment of Caxton and his work, from which he emerges as something much more than the introducer of printing into the country.

There is enough quotation to make the book a good incidental anthology of verse and prose in its period, and translations of all difficult words—really all of them—are given in footnotes. The volume has a most helpful bibliography, and those who may wish, in spite of everything, to read the original texts will have no difficulty in finding out where they are, and who has commented on them.

H. S. DAVIES

SHOPS AND SHOPPING

The Shops of Britain. A STUDY OF RETAIL DISTRIBUTION. By HERMANN LEVY. *Kegan Paul.* 21s.

Are there too many shops? Most people will probably answer that there are; and certainly this will be the opinion of most shopkeepers. Are the small traders being crushed out by the growth of multiple stores, Co-operatives and large department stores? Most small traders believe that they are; but the statistics, which are admittedly defective, do not show much evidence of it. Chain and department stores encroach in many lines of business, and many independent shops get bought up to the accompaniment of anguished cries from the friends of the small traders; but expanding fields, such as garage keeping and wireless dealing, provide many new opportunities for the would-be independent "small man." Even in the older lines there is no sign of the early disappearance of small bakers, grocers, greengrocers, butchers, chemists, drapers, outfitters, tailors, tobacconists and newsagents—to name only a few of the traditional "small man" trades. No doubt, in some of these cases the retailer has become much more a mere dealer in branded and packeted articles, and much less of a processor-craftsman than he used to be; but that is not to say that he shows any sign of dying out.

Professor Levy in this book makes an interesting, but necessarily tentative, survey of facts and trends. Till there has been the promised full Census of Distribution no more than this can be done. But certain conclusions can be pretty safely drawn. One is that the policy of price-maintenance practised by manufacturers and trade associations in many lines of business aids the survival of the small shopkeeper, by virtually guaranteeing him a margin on which he can live. Another is that the size of this margin, fixed to cover the relatively inefficient unit, does not lead to nearly as high profits as might be expected among the larger traders because, precluded from cutting prices, they use most of it up in competitive provision of services, in expensive equipment and high rents, and in paying more for labour than their small competitors. Professor Levy is strongly hostile to the attempts in many fields to restrict either the number of retail shops allowed to exist, or required by the suppliers' associations, or the range of articles in which particular shops may deal. Rightly he holds that the overlapping of side-lines is on the whole in the customers' interests, and that restriction of the number of shops aids the monopolist and would be likely to lead to still more wasteful competition in services. He also defends the "shop round the corner" as a necessary convenience in many lines, though not in all. Regrettably he does not give much consideration to the contest between the "Co-ops" and the private chains, though he praises the "Co-ops" for economy in distributive costs and services.

Professor Levy's most interesting chapters are those in which he discusses the position and prospects of a number of particular trades, largely in order to warn his readers of the danger of generalising about "shops" as a whole. Incidentally, he wonders why ironmongers have shown so much less tendency than drapers to branch out into department storekeeping. He suggests possible answers, but not the obvious one, that ironmongers cater largely for male customers, whereas woman is the chief *fons et origo* of the department store.

G. D. H. COLE

Drugs from Plants. By T. I. WILLIAMS. *Sigma Books.* 6s.
Molecules Against Microbes By E. S. DUTHIE. *Sigma Books.* 6s.
The Conquest of the Unknown. By GEORGE BANKOFF. *Macdonald.* 6s.

One of the problems that scientists have not solved is how to organise a comprehensive information office. The dilemma is clear. On the one hand the layman's apprehension that scientific research affects him vitally here and now; on the other, an accumulation of records so vast that the specialist is no longer master of his own field. The earnest seeker after introductions to science is too likely to find himself shaking hands with people who are more voluble than informative. His best hope is to look out for the small dose of information administered by a man who knows his subject and avoids both the trivial and the turgid in popularising it. Such publicity officers are sometimes to be found: three are in this list.

Dr. Williams, writing on drugs (both good and evil) from plants, goes back to man's earliest efforts to doctor and dope himself. He starts with the brewers

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of potions, herb gardens and the surviving herbalist's shop, and shows how the chemist has taken a collection of old wives' tales and turned them into a science by breaking down the plant tissue and extracting in each case the significant molecule. Dr. Williams takes the reader as far as penicillin, which also figures largely in *Molecules against Microbes*. In this excellent book Dr. Duthie makes a remarkable attempt to get all round the work that has been done on the invader diseases. He shows on the one hand how the biologists have tracked down bacteria and protozoa and studied their activities in the body of the host; and on the other hand how the synthetic chemists have laboured endlessly, and largely in the dark, to build complex molecules which will kill the invader without injuring the host. Molecules against Microbes is a truly dramatic subject; Dr. Duthie achieves the drama, as it should be done, in strictly scientific terms.

The unknown of Dr. Bankoff's title are the endocrine glands. More sensational nonsense has been written on this than on any other medical subject. This account is more deliberately popular than the other books in this list, and Dr. Bankoff sometimes lingers longer than seems necessary on the horrors which occur when almost any ductless gland goes wrong, but he is in the main both readable and informative.

Week-end Competitions

No 950

Set by Naomi Lewis.

The usual prizes are offered for a 200-word extract from a *Times* obituary notice of the Devil. Entries by May 10.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 947

Set by Thomas Smallbones

The usual prizes are offered for the famous last words of any mammal.

Report by Thomas Smallbones

There are two kinds of Famous Last Words, the historic (pathos, irony, courage, "Bellamys Pies," "More Light") and the ill-timed prophecy so popular in the late war ("It's alright, one of ours.") The latter was the more popular although many competitors foundered either on the Scylla of Facetiousness or the Charybdis of the Obvious. How many cats in the large entry had one over the eight! How many camels loaded with their last straws crept through how many needles. How many steeple-chasers fell at their Styx. How many elephants forgot. But there were some charming variations on these themes. I award half a guinea to the starred entries. De gustibus. . .

WOLF

*I think I'll wear my sheepskin. Joan Grant.

WHALES

And my body I leave to Britain. C. M. Grosset.

Oh, flesh, flesh, how thou art fishified. C. B. Kaufman.

CATS

I thought it was the eighth. D. C. M. W.

We're perfectly safe. A dog won't come near you if you spit at it. Caligula.

I maintain that curiosity is a healthy instinct. R. M. Lang.

I had hoped to reach double figures. Leslie Johnson.

MICE

I'll show you how to get it. S. F.

Of course I *prefer* Gorgonzola. R. J. P. Hewison.

You sit on the spring and I'll lift the cheese off. G. W. Morris.

*Nonsense dear—I've rendered hundreds of traps harmless. L. E. J.

LEMMINGS

Come on in! The water's fine. J. G. Bowen.

What a stirring noise! V. R. Abbott.

PIGS

I shouldn't call it humane. M. D. A.

You certainly live well in these Pig-clubs. R. M. Lang.

(One of the Gadareus). Race you down! S. F.

SEALS

I've just popped up for one last breather. W. Stewart.

But I don't *want* to be a nice coat. G. Culliford.

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TORTOISE

*(Scoffingly) Oh Eternity . . . .! T. Davies.

BADGER

Request permission to shave. J. R. Till.

SKUNK

*Well its an ill wind . . . C. E. G. Nye.

STAGS

Don't be silly they can't get petrol. "Rex."

TARSIER

*All branch lines come to a dead end. R. Hemington.

MANDRILLS

I hope my end is as beautiful as my mother's. Stanley J. Sharpless.

My glories are behind me. Charles Higham.

SCAPEGOAT

*Please——nothing forwarded. Ronald Lambton.

ELEPHANTS

My memory is failing me. P. R. Toovey.

GIRAFFE

*The reef-knot, of course, is easier. Pan.

PLATYPI

I'm a borderline case. C. E. J. Nye.

I've always felt that being a link was somehow vulgar. T. D. MacEwan.

SILVER FOX

Okay fellows, its Bernard Shaw. "Rosa."

GUINEA PIG

*I'm on research. S. B. T.

SHEEP

*Leader knows best. Xerxes.

And do I look any sillier than you will? R. D. C.

ZEBRA

*I wonder if I'll lose my stripes? Richard Pomfret

FATTED CALF

So this is what I get for wasting mine. R. S. Jaffray.

LIZARD

But I can always grow another. G. Culliford.

MOLE

*It's alright. I'm not blind! R. M. Lang.

BEAR (RUSSIAN)

No, no, a thousand times no! L. Marshall Jones.

WALRUS

That last oyster tasted a bit high. N. Stewart.

RATS

*We should have paid the piper. L. E. J.

POSSUM

Practice makes perfect. Guy Innes.

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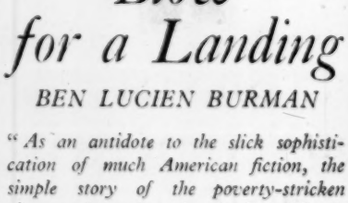

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Appointments Vacant

None of the vacancies in these columns relates to a man between 18 and 50 inclusive or a woman between 18 and 40 inclusive unless he or she is excepted from the provision of the Control of Engagement Order, 1947, or the vacancy is for employment excepted from the provision of that Order.

L.C.C. Education Officer's Dept. Applics. invited for appointment as Senior Assistant Educ. Officer to be responsible for admin. of whole of Council's further (including technical) educ. system, and such other duties as may be assigned from time to time. Salary is £1,500–£100–£1,800 a year. In the assessment of qualifics. of candidates, due weight will be given to (a) exp. in administration; (b) knowledge and exp. of further educ. including technological and commercial education; (c) a Univ. degree or equivalent; (d) teaching and/or industrial exp. Applic. forms from Clerk of the Council (G), The County Hall, London, S.E.1 (1.a. foolscap env. necessary), to be returned by May 12. Canvassing disqualifies. (773.)

UNIVERSITY College of West Indies: Dept. of Social and Economic Research. Applics. invited for post of head of above dept. Appointment will be for a period of five years in first instance, and will carry a salary, depending on the qualifics. and exp. of holder, of between £1,000 and £1,200, with status of Reader, or £1,500, with status of Professor, together with free passages to and from Jamaica, and payment of contributions to any approved superann. scheme to which holder belongs. Primary responsibilities of holder will be to initiate and organize dept. and to plan and conduct research in British West Indies and Caribbean region; but he may be required to undertake some teaching duties. Applics., giving partics. of age, academic qualifics., exp., and published writings, together with names of three refs. who can speak from personal knowledge of ability of candidate, should be sent, by May 31, to Under Secretary of State, Research Dept., Colonial Office, Palace Chambers, Bridge St. S.W.1, from whom further partics. can be obtained.

APPLICS. invited from men and women for post (in Government Dept.) as a Temporary Chief Executive Officer. Salary scale—men £1,000 to £1,200, women £830 to £1,025 p.a. Duties consist of supervising a group of specialists engaged in collating and digesting material on all aspects of political, economic and social and scientific developments in United Kingdom as a basis for Government information and publicity activities overseas, maintaining contacts for this purpose with all Government Departments, and editing and supervising the production of reference papers for official use. Qualifics. should include a Univ. degree, preferably in social sciences, wide knowledge of political, social and economic affairs, exp. in research and documentation, ability to select and present lucidly the essential points from large masses of fact, and exp. in handling research staff. Written applics., giving date of birth, full details of qualifics. and exp., including dates, should be addressed to London Appointments Officer, 1-6, Tavistock Sq. London, W.C.1, quoting ref. K.W.61. Original refs. must not be forwarded. Only candidates selected for interview will be advised.

B.B.C. invites applics. for post of Music Assistant, Wales, based at Cardiff. Duties include organising and supervising musical programmes, holding auditions and co-ordinating the publicity and presentation of music programmes. Candidates should have a knowledge of choral training and conducting. A knowledge of Welsh language and of Welsh music is essential. Salary is in a grade rising by annual increments of £40 to a max. of £890 p.a. Detailed applics. to Appointments Officer, Broadcasting House, London, W.1, marked "Music Wales N. Stm." within 7 days. For acknowledgment enclose s.a.e.

UNIVERSITY of Durham—Institute of Education. Applics. invited for three posts of Staff Tutor concerned with (1) Secondary Modern School Work, (2) Drama, (3) Psychology of Childhood and Adolescence. Salary £450 p.a., rising by £25 to £800, with superann. (F.S.S.U.). Initial salary according to qualifics. and exp. Applics. (9 copies) should reach W. S. Angus, Registrar, University Office, 46 North Bailey, Durham (from whom further partics. may be obtained), by Tues. May 18, 1948.

UNIVERSITY of Melbourne. Applics. invited for postn. of Lecturer in Personnel Practice in Dept. of Social Studies. Sal. £400–£650 (Australian) p.a. plus £78(A) p.a. cost of living allowance subject to superannuation contribution. Further partics. may be obtained from Secretary, Universities Bureau of the British Empire, 8 Park St. W.1. Applics. with the reqd. partics. to be lodged with the Registrar, University of Melbourne, Carlton, N.3, Melbourne, Australia, by June 30.

L.C.C. Psychiatric Social Worker reqd. at St. Ebba's hospital (for nervous and mental disorders), Epsom, Sy. Exp. essential. Candidates pref. should hold the Mental Health Certificate of London School of Economics or equivalent qualific. and will be reqd. to cooperate with medical staff in investigating history of mental cases and supervising social welfare of patients. Sal. scale (qualified staff) £370–£530 p.a. (commencing sal. according to exp.). Apply to Medical Officer of Health (MHS/B), County Hall, Westminster Bridge, S.E.1. (842.)

UNIVERSITY College, Southampton. Applics. invited for temporary post of Statistical Assistant in Dept. of Economics. Sal. £300–£350. Further partics. from Registrar, to whom applics. to be sent before May 15.

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Appointments Vacant—continued

HAMPSHIRE C.C. Child Guidance Service. Applics. invited for post of whole-time Psychiatric Social Worker on staff of County Medical Officer. Candidates should hold the Mental Health Certificate or a Diploma approved by the Association of Psychiatric Social Workers, and should have had exp. in social work. Sal. in accordance with scale laid down by the Joint Negotiating Committee, namely, £370 p.a. rising by annual increments to £530 p.a. inclusive of cost of living allowance. Use of a car is essential for appointment, and if the officer's private car is used, travelling allowances will be paid on the County Scale for the time being in force. Applic. forms, with full details of appointment, obtainable from County Medical Officer, The Castle, Winchester, to whom completed forms to be returned by May 10.

UNIVERSITY College, Southampton. Applics. invited for post of Lecturer or Assistant Lecturer in Government. Salary according to qualifics. and experience. For further particulars apply to Registrar to whom applics. must be sent by May 15.

ASSISTANT to Director of Medical Research Centre. Duties would include assisting with the writing up of work for publication and dealing with correspondence, with part-time available for research. Sal. £400. Facility at writing and a science qualifica. desirable. Dept. is affiliated with the University. Applics., naming a referee, to be sent at once to Director, Neuropsychiatric Research Centre, Whitchurch Hospital, Cardiff.

INSTITUTE of Personnel Management, 70 Old Broad St. E.C.2, require woman, preferably with University education and knowledge of industrial problems, to edit and produce bi-monthly Journal and publications. Further particulars obtainable from Secretary.

CLUB Leader (full time) wanted June 1 for Play Centre and Girls' Club in Waterloo District, S.E.1. Salary from £300 p.a. according to exp. Hostel accom. can be arranged if desired. Apply Mrs. Home, Warden, Ethelm House, Cornwall Rd. S.E.1. Waterloo 7021.

ASSISTANT Warden and Club Leader reqd., sal. £180 plus board and lodging. Apply, giving details of qualifics. and exp. and copies of 3 testimonials, to Sec., Chesterfield Settlement, Church Lane, Chesterfield.

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LONDON Jewish Hospital, Stepney Green, E.1. Shorthand-typist required in East London Child Guidance Clinic and Psychiatric Department at the London Jewish Hospital. Apply, stating age and experience to Secretary, London Jewish Hospital, Stepney Green, E.1.

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